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FRENCH CLASSICAL
CRITICS IN ENGLAND
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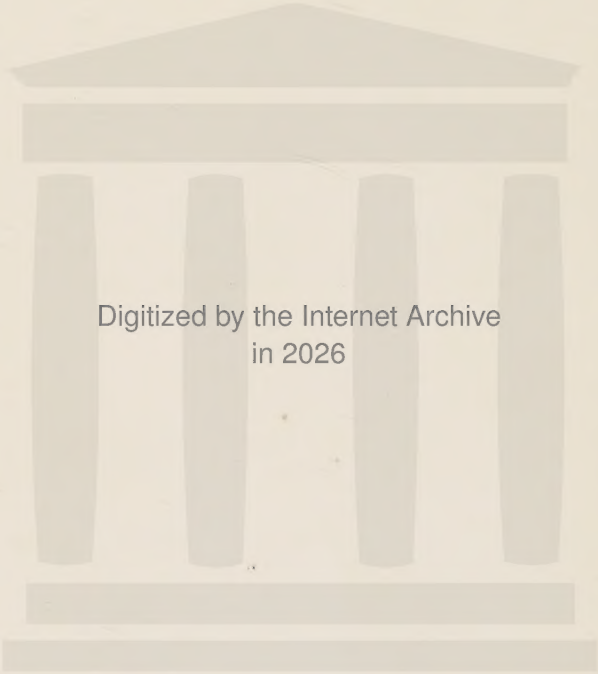
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BOILEAU AND THE FRENCH CLASSICAL CRITICS IN ENGLAND

(1660-1830)

BY

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PREFACE

A few years ago a distinguished French scholar was lecturing in an English provincial city. At the close of his lecture a member of his audience introduced himself and presented for the visitor's inspection a manuscript translation of Boileau's *Satires* made by himself. The Frenchman, in relating the incident afterwards, expressed surprise that, in the twentieth century, an Englishman could be found to whom Boileau, of all French writers, could appeal, not merely as an author to read but as one worthy to honour with the toils of translation. Such a comment on a Frenchman's part gives us the measure of the depths to which Boileau's reputation has fallen, not only in England, but in France. Of the brilliant group of writers who rendered illustrious the Age of Louis XIV, none has seen his laurels so tarnished by the lapse of time as Boileau. Of all the foreign writers who occupy the privileged position of "classics" on the shelves of libraries, Boileau is perhaps the one on whose volumes the dust is least often disturbed, and it is probably only scholastic tradition that keeps his works on the curricula of schools and colleges.

Yet for more than a hundred years this now neglected author was the literary dictator of Europe, and in England at least, I think it is safe to say that no modern foreign author was so often mentioned by men of letters or so well known to the average reader. In fact, it is doubtful if, either before or since that time, any foreign writer has held such a position of authority for so long a period in England. It has been surmised that such high prestige was not without a corre-

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sponding influence on English literature. Yet the story of Boileau's fortunes and influence in England has never been fully told. *Travaux d'approche* have not been lacking ; but no conspectus of the whole subject has even, to my knowledge, been attempted. This book is intended as a contribution to the filling of this gap in literary history. In it I propose to trace the history of Boileau's reputation in England from 1660 to 1830, to examine all the English poems that have been translated or imitated from his works during that period, and to assess as accurately as possible the measure of his influence upon English literature. In carrying out this task I have made full use of the labours of other workers in this field ; my aim has been to bring within the covers of one book all that can be known on the subject. Therefore, though much of the book is the product of my own original research, much, also, is incorporated from previous studies. But, in the latter case, I have always tested the conclusions of my predecessors by going over the same ground myself and have often differed with them on certain points.

It soon became apparent in the course of preparing this study that the question of Boileau's influence upon English critical theory — and, indeed, upon English poetry — could not be dissociated from a consideration of the influence exerted by the rather numerous band of minor French critics who flourished in the later seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries. Yet this too is a topic which, though illuminated at many points by previous research, has as yet not been the object of any *étude d'ensemble*. I have, therefore, interrupted the story of Boileau to devote one whole section of this study to a survey of the fortunes of these lesser luminaries of French classicism in England. But it must be clearly understood that in Book III I have not aimed at even that measure of exhaustiveness which I have tried to attain in the case of Boileau. The study of these minor critics has been merely subsidiary to the study of Boileau's influence,

and my main object has been achieved when I have assembled sufficient evidence to show in what *direction* their influence worked, and whether it coalesced with his or went counter to it or was simply irrelevant to it. Though this caveat must be kept in mind, I think it will be found that this section contains, nevertheless, the most complete bird's-eye view of its subject that as yet exists. The work as a whole, then, takes on the character of a general survey of French classicism on the theoretical side in England, plus a study of Boileau's influence on certain creative departments of English literature.

Political and literary history seemed to fix of themselves the date at which our survey should begin. The Restoration of Charles II and the composition of Boileau's first poem synchronized almost exactly, and, although no reference to Boileau in English can be definitely dated earlier than the seventies, the almost poetic fitness of the coincidence and the strong probability that Boileau's early poems were known to Royalist circles in the sixties, made 1660 the natural starting-point. The *terminus ad quem* was more difficult to select. But on the whole, the year 1830, which usually is taken to mark the moment at which the Romantic movement in English literature had attained its full fruition, seemed a suitable closing date; Boileau's sun had set by that time in England, and to pursue it below the horizon would be an adventure of pure curiosity, fraught with no results for real literary history.

Boileau will seem to the average reader rather unpromising material for the hero of such a large book, when compared to the great figures, like Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare and Homer, who have been the subjects of brilliant comparative studies within recent years; and such a reader, in following the trail of a Le Bossu or a Rapin, will perhaps feel as though he were participating in a conducted tour through a literary Sahara, and will be inclined to invoke upon the head of his *cicerone* the terrible curse of *The Dunciad*:

> To future ages may thy dulness last,
> As thou preserv'st the dulness of the past.

The vicissitudes of the "religious epic" will seem to him as uninspiring as the bones of some pre-historic monster. But the trained student of literary history will perhaps be less depressed by the drabness of the story. He will realize that even the arid deserts and polar wastes of the literary as well as of the physical world need to be explored and mapped out, if our literary cartography is not to be as whimsical as the world-charts of the ancients. In these remote places may be found strange spiritual flora and fauna which will throw new light on the human mind, if only to illustrate its capacity for freakishness. Only recently, in speaking of the "machines" of epic poetry, of which something will be said in this book, the late Professor W. P. Ker remarked that they are "not meaningless for the present age, if it is at all concerned with the mind of its ancestors."[1] Besides, the patient student may find that Boileau serves as an excellent touchstone for discerning subtle changes in literary taste. The early battles of the great Classical-Romantic war rage about his name, and the ups and downs of the great conflict and the tactics of the leaders on both sides are nowhere to be better studied than from the vantage-point of this central fortress of classicism. Finally, an investigation that takes us into the poetical laboratory of a Dryden and a Pope and lets us glimpse the ingredients that went into the composition of their bombs and *fusées* of satire, cannot be wholly dull in its potentialities, however it may fail in the execution.

Few models in English or American scholarship exist for a worker in this field. Dr. Toynbee's monumental work on Dante in England is conceived on a plan that could not be followed in my study. I have tried to keep constantly before my eyes as the distant goal of my endeavour —

1. *Modern Language Review*, July, 1923, v. XVIII, No. 3, p. 360.

impossible as it has been to reach it — the high standard set up by the brilliant and industrious school of "comparatistes" that has grown up in France since the beginning of this century, under the distinguished leadership of Professor Fernand Baldensperger. The numerous and substantial monographs produced by this band of scholars, who exemplify in everything they write the best traditional qualities of French literary erudition — its solid documentation united with power of generalization and clearness of presentation — have made of France the centre of comparative studies.

These French monographs have been characterized by the thoroughness with which they have probed for evidences of a writer's influence among hitherto neglected classes of documents. I have tried to make this method my own in the present work. I have examined, not only poets and critics of the first and second class, but a great number of obscure volumes by people who never reached any degree of literary fame, the protozoa of literature, as they have been called, which yet are particularly valuable for giving us the average literary outlook of an age; I have gone through files of all the English periodicals of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that were accessible to me; I have not neglected memoirs, diaries, or correspondence; and in one case I have made use of manuscript material. Absolute exhaustiveness in a work of this kind is, of course, never to be attained; each additional year of labour would unquestionably bring more grist to our mill; a term must be set somewhere; and it seems reasonable to set it when enough material has been harvested to make clear beyond peradventure the main phases of Boileau's reputation in England and the main directions in which his influence was exerted. Further research might re-inforce our conclusions with new evidence; it is improbable that it would open up new vistas in our subject.

The " comparatiste " is the internationalist of literary scholarship, and he is liable to be looked upon with that distrust and suspicion which internationalists of all kinds have so often the misfortune to evoke. Professor Saintsbury has described for us the anything but hospitable welcome which often awaits the literary world-wanderer when he puts into foreign ports. I can only pray for a more clement fate, for I fear I have given many hostages to criticism in the following pages. Not only have I had to cross and re-cross constantly the frontiers of two great literatures, French and English, but I have occasionally been compelled to touch the fringes of Greek, Latin and Italian literatures. My only plea is that the task needed to be done ; and it is better that it should be done in pioneer-fashion than that it should not be done at all. I have at least broken a rough trail, which others may transform into a road. I shall welcome corrections, not only by specialists in matters that are properly beyond my competence, but by scholars generally in the manifold details in which error is almost inevitable in a book of this complexity. The work of composition has proceeded at a remote distance from large libraries, and in some cases it has proved practically impossible to confirm the accuracy of certain minute details of literary history, such as dates, page-references in out-of-the-way volumes, etc.

It remains to express my thanks to those who have aided me in the prosecution of this work. I am indebted to Professor Irving Babbitt for the suggestion of the subject and for valuable guidance during the earlier stages of its development, and to the following among former teachers and fellow-students at Harvard University for helpful ideas or counsel — Professor G. L. Kittredge, Professor W. A. Neilson, (now President of Smith College), Professor C. H. C. Wright, Professor Greenough (now Dean of Harvard College), Mr. E. Bernbaum (now of the University of Illinois), Mr. P. R. Lieder (now of Smith College). During my year as Harvard

Fellow at the Sorbonne, I was able to profit from the valuable criticism of Professors Fernand Baldensperger and Émile Legouis who were kind enough to read over the sketchy essay which formed the nucleus of the present book, and from the stimulating conversation of Professor Gustave Lanson (now Director of the École Normale Supérieure) who gave generously of his time to discuss the subject with me. I am under a debt of gratitude to M. Jusserand, Ambassador of France at Washington, for the loan of books from his private library, to the Princess Radzivill for services rendered me in Paris, to Mr. Percy L. Babington of Cambridge University for the generous loan of his transcription of "The Desk", to Professor A. O. Lovejoy of the Johns Hopkins University for aid in procuring books and to Professor Lane Cooper of Cornell University for helpful suggestions. My researches have been facilitated in every way by the directors and assistants of the following institutions — the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, The Boston Athenaeum, the Harvard Library, the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, the University of Chicago Library, the University of California Library, the University of British Columbia Library, the Public Library of Toronto, the University of Toronto Library, and the libraries connected with the following Toronto institutions — Trinity College, Victoria College, Knox College, McMaster University, the Provincial Legislature, the Provincial Education Department; it is a particular pleasure to record my indebtedness to these libraries of my native city, so rich in sets of the English periodicals of the eighteenth century. In the preparation of my manuscript I have had the unwearying and efficient assistance of my wife. The appearance of the book in print has been rendered possible, on the one hand, by the enlightened generosity of the Board of Governors of the University of British Columbia in giving substantial aid towards its publication, and on

the other by the readiness of Messrs Baldensperger and Hazard and of their publisher M. Champion, to give it a place in the distinguished series in which it appears.

In closing I must revert once more to the names of Professors Babbitt and Baldensperger, whose long-continued interest in my work has been a great encouragement to a "comparatiste" cut off by geographical remoteness from intercourse with his fellow-workers.

Vancouver, B. C., Canada,
April, 1924.

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BOOK I

THE HISTORY OF BOILEAU'S REPUTATION IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

DURING THE AGE OF DRYDEN

In the very year which saw the triumphal return of Charles II to London, Nicolas Boileau wrote his first Satire in Paris. Although the beginnings of a new age in English literature and the " first sprightly runnings " of a talent that was to exert such an influence on that age coincided so exactly, the fame of Boileau did not penetrate into England immediately. Whatever the reason may be, that barometer of foreign influence, translation, is much lower in the first years of Charles's reign than it had been for half a century. [1] When it goes up again, Boileau is among the first to profit from the rise and his fame spreads very rapidly.

The first translations and imitations of Boileau, as will be seen in the following Book, are probably to be dated in the early seventies. They are nearly all from the pens of that group usually known in literary histories as the Court Poets. Though in point of ethics and literary decency these writers were worlds apart from the friend of Arnauld and Lamoignon, yet they were, on the whole, the obvious men to introduce Boileau into England. They had lived in France; they had come to appreciate French literature; they had made a clean break with the English pre-Restoration literary traditions, both Puritan and " metaphysical "; they had the natural leaning of witty courtiers towards satire and epigram on the one hand and panegyric on the other; and they had, perhaps, some vague idea of centring around Charles II a literary " Pléiade " modelled on that of the French Augustus.

The character of the translations and imitations from Boileau, made by these men, and the question of their influence upon

1. " At the Restoration there was a decided falling-off in this work of translation. In fact, all the translations from the French produced during the 25 years of Charles II's reign hardly surpass in number those which appeared during the last eight years of the Commonwealth. " A. A. Tilley, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, v. VIII, p. 372.

English literature will be examined in succeeding Books. As for critical remarks on Boileau by these zealous sectaries, we shall look in vain for them. The only possible exceptions to this statement, mentioned below, do not encourage us to believe that much has been lost to the world by the absence of more; the age of literary "appreciations" had, in fact, not yet arrived; and, if it had, the critical ability of the Court Poets was not such as to profit by it. The only tribute they paid to Boileau was the genuine but inarticulate one of going to school to him.

Of the Court Poets proper, only one has left a definite acknowledgment of his admiration for Boileau; and the authenticity of the words is not beyond a doubt. When Dr. Burnet asked Rochester for which of the modern poets he had the most esteem, "he answered without the least hesitation, for Boileau among the French and Cowley among the English poets."[1] If the anecdote is authentic, it will illustrate the amateurish eclecticism which is so marked in the poetry of these men and which would have probably been equally marked in their criticism, if they had produced much of it.

One romantic figure of the age, who, though never counted among the Court Poets proper, was certainly of the same "set", did try his hand at more elaborate commentary on Boileau. This was Lord Cutts[2], one of the most famous soldiers of the time, to whom Isaac Watts addressed his poem "The Hardy Soldier", and of whom Swift spoke in less flattering terms. To be "brave and brainless as the sword he wears" and "about fifty and the vainest fool alive" may be qualifications for war but not for criticism. When the Duchess of Monmouth "honoured" him with her commands to read over Monsieur Boileau's *Poems* and give his "opinion of him", what could a gallant officer do but comply, even though he might prefer to leap into the "imminent deadly breach?" He seems not to have had any previous acquaintance with Boileau, for he begins his poem by thanking

1. *Original Letters of John Dennis*, vol. X, p. 74.

2. John Cutts, Baron Cutts of Gowran, Ireland (1661-1707), fought against the Turks in Hungary. Created Baron in 1690 by King William. Fought in Ireland, Holland, Flanders. Appointed Governor of Isle of Wight. Distinguished himself at Siege of Namur. Took part in War of the Spanish Succession. Was third in command at the Battle of Blenheim. Was nicknamed "Salamander" for his courage in battle. Published *La Muse du Cavalier*; *or An Apology for such gentlemen as make poetry their diversion not their business in a letter by a scholar of Mars to one of Apollo* in 1685; *Poetical Exercises written on several Occasions*, in 1687. See *D.N.B.* vol. XIII, p. 367 for further details.

... that fair hand who pointed out the way
And shewed me where so great a genius lay;
Your generous commands have guided me
To a good model of true poetry.

His poem reminds one of those exercises in compression and "résumé" often imposed on school-children by their "English" teacher. It consists mainly of successive summings-up of several of Boileau's satires in rather awkward verse. Criticism is hardly attempted. Yet the average contemporary reader's sense of Boileau's peculiar literary *ethos* finds fairly adequate expression for the first time in the following lines:

Of all the modern writers who have tried
With easy wit men's follies to deride,
Boileau, to me, the most accomplished seems;
Bold and severe, yet free from all extremes.
Nature to some has given an active wit,
But hardly sense enough to manage it.
.....
But Boileau's easy and unerring wit
Does every coxcomb so exactly hit, etc. [1].

We glimpse through these commonplace lines the wide-spread disgust of the period with the wayward imaginings and careless style of the later "metaphysical" and Cavalier poets and the sense of refreshment with which it read Boileau's simple and masculine verse with its blending of energy and good taste.

The date of the composition of this poem does not seem to have been ascertained. It appeared in the *Poetical Exercises written upon several occasions presented and dedicated to Her Royal Highness, Mary Princess of Orange*, published in 1687; if we take into account Cutts's birth-year (1661), it can hardly have been composed before the eighties. Returning now to the seventies, we meet, not amateurs, but two of the front-rank figures of English literature, John Oldham and John Dryden.

How pervasive the influence of Boileau was on both these men will be shown later. What concerns us here is the judgments, if any, which they expressed of the French poet who stimulated them so

1. Though the poem has been recently reprinted in *The Life and Poetry of John Cutts*, by S. S. Swartley (Philadelphia, 1917), yet it is not so easily accessible but that it seemed worth while to reproduce it *in extenso* in Appendix A.

much. Oldham, unfortunately, who was probably the first important English poet to undergo the Bolevian influence, has left us not a single critical remark, not even a passing allusion to Boileau's name. Dryden, on the other hand, talks abundantly of his great French contemporary, and has left one magnificent tribute to him. His first reference (the earliest dated reference in English literature) in his essay *On Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence* (1677), is merely a passing one to Boileau (and Rapin) as " amongst the French the greatest of this age. " [1] Boileau is referred to here in his capacity as a critic; it is questionable whether that was the aspect of him which ever appealed most to Dryden, least of all at that early and still romantic period; at all events, the very spirit of the essay as a whole with its belittling of " common sense " goes straight counter to the tenets of Boileau. However that may be, the famous passage celebrating Boileau the poet, written sixteen years later, rings true : " If I would only cross the seas I might find in France a living Horace and a Juvenal, in the person of the admirable Boileau; whose numbers are excellent, whose expressions are noble, whose thoughts are just, whose language is pure, whose satire is pointed, and whose sense is close; what he borrows from the Ancients he pays with usury of his own, in coin as good and almost as universally valuable ; for, setting prejudice and partiality apart, though he is our enemy, the stamp of a Louis, the patron of all arts, is not much inferior to the medal of an Augustus Caesar. " [2] The praise is characteristically generous ; but Dryden puts his finger on the strong points in Boileau in a manner that has never been much improved on since ; and, in discovering a combination of the qualities of Horace and Juvenal in the French satirist, he strikes a critical note that was re-echoed for a hundred years.

The essay in which this passage occurs, *On the Original and Progress of Satire*, contains several other Boileau-*loci*. In comparing the three Roman satirists, he concludes : " Let Persius, the last of the first three worthies, be contented with this Grecian shield, and with victory, not only over all the Grecians, who were ignorant of the Roman satire, but over all the moderns in succeeding ages, excepting Boileau and your Lordship " (i. e. Dorset, to whom the essay is dedicated). [3] Speaking of " unity of design " in satires, he

1. See W. P. Ker's edition of *Dryden's Essays*, v. I, p. 181.
2. Ker, v. II, p. 26.
3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 99.

says : " Boileau, whose example alone is sufficient authority, has wholly confined himself, in all his *Satires*, to this unity of design. "[1] Reference will be made in the next Book to some of Dryden's remarks on *Le Lutrin*.[2] Besides what is quoted there, he points out some " parallel passages " in Virgil and Boileau, and concludes thus : " We see Boileau pursuing him (Virgil) in the same flights, and scarcely yielding to his master. This, I think, my Lord, to be the most beautiful, and most noble kind of Satire. Here is the majesty of the heroic finely mixed with the venom of the other ; and raising the delight which otherwise would be flat and vulgar by the sublimity of the expression. I could say somewhat more of the delicacy of this and some other of his satires ; but it might turn to his prejudice, if 'twere carried back to France ".[3] This is one of the most exasperating passages in all criticism ; for here, in an age given over to colourless references to Boileau's " correctness ", " good sense ", " closeness ", etc., we were actually on the brink of getting some concrete " appreciation " of the *Satires* and *Le Lutrin* from the hand of one of the greatest of English satirists and critics who was at the same time a contemporary of Boileau, — and lo ! Dryden's hand is stayed by some cryptically-expressed fear. He has said enough, however, to make it evident that he read Boileau with attention and sincere admiration and also that it was rather Boileau the satirist and the author of *Le Lutrin* than Boileau the critic who appealed to him. The chief point of critical contact between the two — on the subject of the Christian Epic — will be discussed below.[4]

One of the men we have considered was a poet only, the other was at least a poet as much as he was a critic. We have now to consider the reaction of Boileau upon two contemporaries of Dryden who were important in their critical capacity only — Rymer and Dennis. The later works of Dennis take us considerably beyond the Age of Dryden, but it seems most convenient to study him here *in toto* and not leave fragments for later chapters.

Thomas Rymer gives us something in the way of criticism that is almost as valuable and as rare as Dryden's " appreciation " quoted above, — to wit, an early example of the comparative method applied to Boileau. The other term in the comparison is Roches-

1. Ker, v. II, p. 103.
2. See p. 155.
3. Ker, v. II, pp. 107-108.
4. See pp. 309-310.

ter, and the object on which the comparison is based is the latter's *Satire upon Man*. "The *Satire upon Man*", says Rymer, "is commonly taken to be a translation from Boileau. The French have ordinarily compared their Ronsards and their Malherbes with Virgil and Horace; Boileau understands better. He has gone furthest to purge out the chaff and trifling, so familiar in the French poetry, and to settle a traffic of good sense among them. It may not be amiss to see some lines of Boileau and of my Lord Rochester together on the same subject". There follows a quotation of fourteen lines from Boileau's *Eighth Satire* with a translation by Oldham and of seven lines of Rochester's *Satire against Mankind*. Rymer proceeds: "It might vex a patient reader, should I go about very minutely to show the differences here betwixt these two authors; 'tis sufficient to set them together. My Lord Rochester gives us another cast of thought, another turn of expression, a strength, a spirit, and manly vigour which the French are utter strangers to. Whatever giant Boileau may be in his own country, he seems little more than a man of straw with my Lord Rochester. What the former had expounded in a long-winded circumference of fourteen lines is here most happily expressed within half the compass. What work might that single couplet ('A spirit free' etc.) make for one that loves to dilate. Some able commentator would hammer out of it all Plato, Origen and Virgil too into the bargain." [1] Not only is this a brave attempt at comparative criticism, but its note of detachment proves that the Age of Dryden was far from indiscriminating in its admiration for Boileau. It does not appear that Rymer was strongly impressed by Boileau's general critical point of view, but we shall see later that, in the matter of burlesque, he did not remain uninfluenced by the French critic. [2]

No English critic was a greater student of Boileau than John Dennis and references to and quotations from him abound in Dennis's works. The various ways in which he adapted his master's literary dogmas to his purposes as an English critic will be best studied in Book IV; but we may fittingly collect here the general remarks he devoted to him as a poet. In a complimentary letter to Dryden in 1694, Dennis reveals that, for him, Boileau was the standard in judging contemporary satirists. "Though I can but hope",

1. *Poems on Several Occasions with Valentinian Tragedy written by the Right Honourable John, late Earl of Rochester*, London, 1696; 1710 (see the Preface to the Reader).

2. See p. 329.

he writes, " that the Confederate forces will give chase to De Lorges and Luxemburgh, I am very confident that Boileau and Racine will be forced to submit to you." [1] It will be recalled that a leading article of Dennis's critical creed was that the inferiority of modern literature to ancient came from the insignificant rôle that religion plays in the former as compared with the latter. This explains the following remarks : " In such forms as comedy and satire, which are independent of religion, the moderns with Jonson and Boileau have born away the prize." [2] " As the moderns have excelled the ancients in Comedy, they have equalled them in Satire. There has been a long difference among the critics whether Horace or Juvenal ought to be preferred in Satire. Their excellencies indeed are very different, and therefore a comparison is not easy to be made. Horace has a great deal of pleasantry and Juvenal a great deal of force, at least for his way of writing. Now Boileau has justly got a great reputation both for force and pleasantry, and consequently is equal to either of the Roman satirists ; and here it will not be amiss to observe that the very same poets among the moderns who have surpassed the ancients in Comedy, and who have equalled them in Satire, have fallen infinitely short of them when they have attempted the greater poetry, as Ben Jonson comes behind them in tragedy and Boileau in the greater Ode "...[3]..." Some of the moderns have been as much encouraged as most of the ancients were and yet fall very much short of them in the greater poetry of which Boileau and Racine are two illustrious examples." [4] Two interesting points come out in these passages ; one is that Dennis is continuing Dryden's view of Boileau as a Horace and Juvenal rolled into one [5] ; the other is that Boileau as a lyric poet already stands condemned in England.

Dryden, as has been seen, was particularly impressed by *Le Lutrin* ; and we shall discover, as we go on, that this was probably the most popular of all Boileau's works in England throughout the period of his influence. Few English readers went so far as to prefer *Le Lutrin* to *The Rape of the Lock* ; but Dennis took this drastic step in his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* (1728), which

1. *Letters upon Several Occasions.* 1696.
2. *Epistle Dedicatory* to *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701).
3. *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, chapter IX.
4. *Ibid.*
5. See p. 6.

is a quaint example of a stage in the development of comparative criticism only slightly more advanced than that of Rymer's parallel between Boileau and Rochester. The critical theory on which the book is based is, of course, simply that of Le Bossu's *Traité du Poëme Epique* [1]; and no doubt the author's enmity against Pope not only disables, to a considerable extent, his excoriation of *The Rape* but it also makes his praise of *Le Lutrin* look a little *tendancieux*. Yet, if we take into account Dennis's consistently admirative attitude towards Boileau throughout his writings and the praise which *Le Lutrin* receives from other quarters at this time, I think we may regard the significance of this book as by no means small.

The Remarks on the Rape of the Lock consists almost entirely of a running comparison between *Le Lutrin* and *The Rape*, to the disadvantage of the latter. Dennis scores his first point in Boileau's favour against Pope by ridiculing the latter's ticketing of his poem as " heroi-comical ". "How much more judiciously does Boileau appear in the title-page of his *Lutrin*! In a sottish emulation of which, this and several late fantasies appear both to you and to me to have been writ. Boileau calls his *Lutrin* an heroic poem and he is so far from raising an expectation of laughter either in the title or in the beginning of the poem, that he tells M. de Lamoignon to whom he addresses it that 'tis a grave subject and must be read with a grave countenance, ' Garde-toi de rire en ce grave sujet'. " [2] Dennis has evidently grasped the point of Boileau's restrained irony.

The main attack then proceeds, and it reveals an attitude towards *Le Lutrin* characteristic of the Age of Dryden, though this particular *critique* post-dates that age considerably. " But now, sir ", continues Dennis, " since I have read that *The Rape of the Lock* seems to be writ in imitation of the *Lutrin* (I mean so far in imitation that the author had a mind to get reputation by writing a great many verses upon an inconsiderable subject, as Boileau appears to have done before him); I believe it will not be disagreeable to you, if I shew the difference between the *Lutrin* and this fantastic poem.

1. See Book III.

2. *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*, p. 6. It was only between 1674 and 1698 that *Le Lutrin* was designated as a " poëme héroïque ". As the result of a criticism by Desmarets to the effect that " héroïque " was too lofty for the subject, it always appeared after that as " héroï-comique ". It is strange that Dennis overlooked this point.

"The *Rape of the Lock* is a very empty trifle, without any solidity or sensible meaning; whereas the *Lutrin* is only a trifle in appearance, but under that appearance carries a very grave and important instruction; for if that poem were only what it appears to be, Boileau would run counter to the formal rules which he has prescribed to others:

> Auteurs, prêtez l'oreille à mes instructions,
> .....
> Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement.

Now, since 'tis impossible that so judicious an author as Boileau should run counter to his own and to the instructions of his master, Horace, the *Lutrin* at the bottom cannot be an empty trifle [1]. 'Tis indeed a noble and important satirical poem, upon the luxury, the pride, the divisions and animosities of the Popish clergy. 'Tis true indeed the admirable address of the poet has made it in appearance a trifle; for otherwise it would not have been suffered in a bigoted Popish country. But yet Boileau in some places seems to have given broad hints at what was his real meaning, as in the following passage:

> La déesse en entrant, qui voit la nappe mise,
> Admire un si bel ordre et reconnaît l'église,

and this other passage is still more bold:

> Pour soutenir tes droits, que le ciel autorise,
> Abîme tout plutôt, c'est l'esprit de l'église.

As the *Rape* is an empty trifle, it can have no fable, or any moral; whereas the *Lutrin* has both fable and moral....."

The conception of *Le Lutrin* as a "noble and important satirical poem against the Popish clergy", while somewhat extinct in 1728, seems to have been general in Dennis's early days, and this partly explains the extraordinary welcome lavished upon it by anti-Papist England in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

Dennis goes on to point out that there is in *The Rape of the Lock* a lack of incidents, which are necessary for producing mirth,

1. A more striking example of the *a priori* reasonings of neo-classic criticism could hardly be found. To Dennis the question is not whether to the reader the *Lutrin seems* or not to be a trifle in fact, but whether according to its author's *principles* it *can* be a trifle.

whereas in *Le Lutrin* there are several, the owl in the pulpit, the prelate giving his benediction to his adversaries, the battle, etc. He closes with a reference to the characters: "The characters in *Le Lutrin* are well-marked. They are the true resemblances of men, who pursue earnestly what they are about. But there is no such thing as a character in *The Rape of the Lock*. Belinda..... is a chimaera and not a character. She is represented by the author perfectly beautiful and well-bred, modest and virtuous. Let us now see how he sustains these qualities in her and then we shall discover what taste he has of nature and decorum." [1] Whatever intrinsic value this may be thought to have to-day, its historical interest will be evident to all students of the history of criticism; it is nothing less —apart from the personal bias of Dennis — than modern comparative criticism (with its attention to artistic details and its constant reference to the concrete object criticized) still struggling in the meshes of Le Bossu's rules.

We have seen above [2] that Dennis's *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* is one of the last expressions of an ecclesiastico-political view of *Le Lutrin* that had its roots in the tense religious strife in Stuart England. We may now go back many years to one of the earlier expressions of this view. In 1692 the Restoration dramatist, John Crowne ("starched Johnny Crowne") published a translation of *Le Lutrin* in English, entitled *The Daeneids* [3]. In dedicating it to the Earl of Mulgrave, Crowne speaks as follows: "Now I venture before your Lordship because I bring an acquaintance of yours I am sure you value, Mr. Boileau; and a piece of his all men of sense have esteemed because it exposes to contempt men who are the antipodes of good sense, priests who advance nonsense above reason, make trifles of the most solemn matters and solemn things of trifles, are idle in the great affairs of their calling and busy in impertinence. By the few we have had amongst us of such kind of churchmen we may guess the misery of people who live in the Roman church, where there are scarce any other,... and past dispute 'tis very fit to render men contemptible who endeavour to make religion so. We have had too many in our church who have busied themselves and embroiled others about things which the French have had the understanding to know were only fit for

1. *Remarks on The Rape of the Lock.*
2. See p. 11.
3. For further treatment of *The Daeneids*, see Book II.

a droll..... " When we take into account such critical remarks as these of Dennis and Crowne along with the remarkable number of translations and imitations of *Le Lutrin* (to be considered in Book II) which began in 1678 (in the year of the Papist Plot) and continued for the next thirty years, it seems justifiable to hold that its literary attractions were well seconded by its timely applicability to English social conditions.

To these tributes to *Le Lutrin*, we may add the remarks of Nicolas Rowe, contained in his *Account of Boileau's writings*, prefixed to Ozell's translation of *Le Lutrin* (1708): " M. Boileau and his works, especially this of his *Lutrin* are of so great a name in the world that I think it a pretty bold attempt to endeavour to translate him..... Amongst that little that I have read of the French poetry, M. Boileau seems to me without comparison to have had the finest and truest taste of the best authors of antiquity ; his violent passion for 'em and famous disputes in their behalf are too well-known to be told over again now ; it is very certain that he had 'em so perpetually in his eye that he formed most of his poetical writings so closely after their models that in many of them, especially his satires, he can hardly pretend to anything more than having translated them well ; and I am apt to believe that if the design of the *Lutrin* be entirely his own and modern, it is because there was nothing in the ancient poetry of this kind for him to draw after. However, it is very plain that even in this Virgil has been of great use to him, and supplied him with some of his finest images... I won't pretend to give you a critical account of Mock-Heroic Poetry, if it can be called a kind, which is so new in the world and of which we have had so few instances. I call it new because I take *La Secchia Rapita* of Tassoni to be the first of this sort that was ever written or at least that ever I heard of ; as for Homer's *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* I take that to be only a tale or fable, like those of Aesop among which it is found and ought to be ranked among the writings of the Mythologists rather than those of the poets. Whatever names or titles the critics may be pleased to dignify or distinguish this writing with, I am sure it has had the good fortune to be very well received ; the reputation of the *Lutrin* in France and of the *Dispensary* in England are two of the best modern instances of success in poetry that can be given. " [1] Ozell himself, in his dedication of his translation to Halifax, speaks

1. For the rest of Rowe's *Account etc.*, see Book II, pp. 169-171.

of " the great reputation M. Boileau has acquired by all his works ", and says, " Boileau, like Horace, was born equally for satire and for praise. The *Lutrin* partakes of both. The satirical part, as 'tis very severe upon those of his own church, so I could wish it were applicable to the Romish clergy and none other. " [1]

The most outspoken faultfinder with Boileau in these early days was that dweller in the literary underworld, Thomas Brown. Boileau's severity of style evidently irritated him ; but he was a sedulous reader of him. In his *Short Essay concerning Satire* he says : " Oldham indeed has not imitated Juvenal as well as my Lord Rochester has paraphrased upon Boileau. But then, as there is no comparison between Boileau and Juvenal, so there's no conclusion to be made from my Lord Rochester's exceeding his original, and Mr. Oldham's not coming up to the genius, beauty and fire of his Roman example. " [2] All this harks back to Rymer [3] and goes straight counter to the habit of comparing Boileau with Horace and Juvenal, common to the age, since Dryden and Dennis gave it their stamp. Brown's *Letters from the Dead to the Living* [4] include one from " Juvenal to Boileau " and an answer by Boileau. These resemble the above-mentioned poem by Cutts [5] in constituting one of the very rare attempts at something like a general critical " review " of Boileau's works [6]. Juvenal thinks Boileau's " first satires very admirable, his expression just and laboriously turned, yet charming and natural ". He would give him a reward for his *Art of Poetry*. But Juvenal-Brown is a heretic on *Le Lutrin*, that universal favourite of the age ; " for your *Lutrin*, that masterpiece of your wit, that highest effort of your imagination, I see nothing in it worthy of you but the versification ". Frankly, he would have preferred a burlesque : " You know a metamorphosis requires an entire change ; therefore since you resolve to imitate Virgil, you should have made choice of noble heroes. He that travestied the *Aeneas* understood it better than you " (shades of Boileau !). This is perhaps the stupidest criticism ever directed against *Le Lutrin*. He goes on to the satires. " What did you mean by reflecting on

1. For the rest of Ozell's *Dedication*, see Book II.
2. *Works* of Thomas Brown, 1715 (4 th ed.), v. I, p. 29.
3. See p. 8.
4. *Works* of Thomas Brown, 1715 (4 th ed.), v. II.
5. See p. 5
6. Brown's works are by no means easily accessible. I have reproduced the full text of both these *Letters* in Appendix B.

particulars in your satire against women ? Did I ever set you that example ? " Then follows an account of the quarrels in Hades that go on between Boileau's friends like Molière and Corneille and his enemies like Chaquelian (Chapelain ?) and St. Amant (all showing considerable knowledge on Brown's part of French literary history), and the letter closes with Juvenal advising Boileau to " renounce his sordid way of praising vice and employ his happy talent in teaching good manners and correcting the bad, which will be an employment worthy of his great genius, and is the only way to recommend him to the good opinion of the learned ancients ".

Brown represents Boileau as being much exercised over this criticism in his *Answer to Juvenal.* " To praise my *Satires* and fall foul upon my *Lutrin*, which made me sweat more drops of water than your drunkard St. Amant (since I must call him so) ever drank of wine, is no favour. After many laborious and fruitless endeavours, finding to my great grief and distraction I could not match you in wit, I resolved if possible to out-do you in malice, which made me take the liberty of romancing a little on St. Amant, falling foul upon people's characters and manners and treating scurvy poets more roughly than you did the Theseis of Codrus..... 'Tis certainly, illustrious bard, more difficult to please the world now than it was in your time; for, if I write satire, I am beaten for it ; if I praise, I am called a mercenary flatterer, which so disheartens me, that I address myself now to my Gardener [1] only ; and do not doubt but some busy nice critic will be censuring this poem also. Not being in the best humour when I writ it, perhaps it may appear something dark and abstruse ; but I can easily excuse that by maintaining that 'tis impossible for the best author in the world to keep up always to the same strain ". Boileau then reveals his chagrin at Perrault's success (does this reveal where Brown's real sympathies lay ?) : " Everyone here learns his verses by heart ; and, in spite of my translation of *Longinus*, which makes it so plainly appear I understand Greek, and know something of poetry, my book begins to be despised. Would it not break a man's heart to see such impertinent stuff preferred before so many sublime pieces? " [2] In view of the great popularity of Brown (he had attained his eighth edition in 1744) is it possible that his

1. An allusion to Boileau's Eleventh Epistle.
2. For further comments of Brown on Boileau, see chapter II of this Book.

coolness towards Boileau represented the secret attitude of many average readers thirsting for something racier and less austere?

These tributes collected from the poets and critics of the Age of Dryden are far from exhausting the evidence for the widespread knowledge of Boileau during that period. For this purpose some sidelights cast by scholar-compilers like Langbaine and Blount are of surprising value. Gerard Langbaine, the first great " Quellenforscher " in English literature, was trying to hunt out the sources of Otway's *Cheats of Scapin* while preparing his *Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (1691). He discovered the authorship of its French original in the following ingenious way, which reveals his intimate acquaintance with the *Art Poétique*. " This play is translated from a French comedy of Molière, though it is not printed amongst his plays of the Amsterdam edition in five tomes which I have by me ; yet that it is his I collect from M. Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, where, speaking of Molière in the Third Canto, he says thus :

> Etudiez la cour et connaissez la ville ;
> .....
> Dans ce sac ridicule où Scapin s'enveloppe,
> Je ne reconnais plus l'auteur du Misanthrope. " [1]

In discussing Rutter's translation of *Le Cid* into English, he quotes Boileau's verses on the original : " But what M. Boileau says of it in his *Ninth Satire* may be sufficient to show the sentiments of the public in its favour ; his words are these :

> En vain contre le Cid un ministre se ligue,
> .....
> Le public révolté s'obstine à l'admirer. " [2]

Sir Thomas Pope Blount drew very heavily on Boileau in that remarkable critical anthology (one of the first of its kind) which he published in 1694, *De Re Poetica ; or, Remarks upon Poetry, with Characters and Censures of the most considerable Poets whether Ancient or Modern, Extracted out of the Best and Choicest Critick*s. In the " Remarks on Poetry ", he is quoted on decency in language (p. 21), on moving the emotions (p. 26), on language and expression (p. 29), on art and nature (p. 35), on the necessity of the poet not being a flatterer (p. 37), on satire (p. 43), on tragedy

1. *Op. cit.*
2. *Op. cit.*

(pp. 52-53), on elegy (pp. 63-64), on songs, sonnets, etc. (p. 70), on the epigram (p. 72), on burlesque (pp. 75-76), on lampoons (pp. 80-81). In the " Characters and Censures ", he is quoted on Aeschylus (p. 2), on Homer (pp. 96-97), on Lucilius (p. 124), on Persius (p. 155), on Sophocles (p. 210). The lines on Waller from Soame's translation of the *Art Poétique* [1] are quoted on pp. 247-250. Rather curiously there is no quotation from Boileau in the article on Tasso.

Further evidence of Boileau's fame among the men of Dryden's Age will be found in the following Books. Enough has been adduced here to show that by the time Pope's earliest works appeared, Boileau's popularity as a satirist, and, above all, as the author of *Le Lutrin*, was firmly established in England. He is a modern Horace and Juvenal in one. He is admired for his combination of vigour and restraint, his purity of language, his wit and his versification. He is far from being deified ; a certain lack of " raciness " is noted in him by Rymer and Brown ; Dennis puts his finger on his weakness as a lyric poet ; Rowe notes his imitations from Horace and Juvenal. Less stress has been laid on his greatness as a critic by these Restoration men ; but, as we shall see later, certain specific literary doctrines of his were already influential in England, while to Dennis he was from the first one of the heroes of criticism. The next age will do him general homage in this respect also.

1. See below, p. 130.

CHAPTER II

PARODY AND PILGRIMAGE

Boileau resembled Dr. Johnson in more than one respect; and in no way more than in exerting an influence, not merely by his writings, but by his personality. He was an institution of the time, not merely in France but abroad. Tributes to his mere literary virtuosity, such as we have collected in the preceding chapter, would give an inadequate idea of the very human and political figure that contemporaries saw in the law-giver of Parnassus, who was at the same time the great spokesman of Louis' imperialism. What we may call two episodes in the history of Boileau's reputation in England in the later years of the seventeenth century serve to bring us into closer touch with the flesh-and-blood Boileau whom the men of his time knew.

One of the episodes is connected with the state of war that existed intermittently between France and England during the two decades centring on the year 1700, and takes the form of slurring references to Boileau as the flatterer of Louis and of parodies on Boileau's panegyrics and war-poems. In all these exercises Boileau is thought of as the Frenchman and the enemy, not as the universal man of letters.

Ammunition for this attack on Boileau is found, not merely in the panegyrical passages of his poetry, but also in the official history of the reign of the "Grand Monarque" which he and Racine were commissioned to write. Boileau, the French historiographer, is assailed in an imaginary letter from "Marcellinus to Mons. Boileau", in *The Letters from the Dead to the Living*[1] of Thomas Brown. Marcellinus objects to being blamed for flattering the emperor Julian in his history, when Boileau has flattered a much worse monarch. "Pellisson is a man of prodigious parts, Boileau the smoothest pen and noblest genius of his time, because

1. *Op. cit.*, v. II, p. 172-176.

their prince is alive and equally generous to reward their flattery, as greedy to have it; but poor I, because I have been dead one thousand four hundred years and better, I am an idle, rascally fellow.... I have nothing comparable to your fustian bombast..."

Dennis, perhaps the most thorough-going admirer of Boileau in England, was disquieted by his master's obsequiousness to Louis. In a letter accompanying his translation of Boileau's *Discours de Réception* at the Academy [1], he too deals with Boileau the historiographer:

I have here sent you enclosed what I promised you by the last post and I think myself obliged to give you some account of it. In the late appendix to the new *Observator* I find the author reasonably complaining of the corruption of history by the French and giving a very reasonable guess how false the history of this age (so far as it is writ by them) is like to come out in the next. And particularly what Monsieur Pellisson's history of the present King of France is like to be, which he is now writing by that king's own order. Monsieur Boileau, who writ the enclosed, has at least as great a share in that history as Monsieur Pellisson; and therefore you have in the enclosed, in the which he has very artfully inserted a panegyrick of his prince a pattern of what his part of history will be. For having flattered his master in this small panegyrick we have all the reason in the world to believe that he will flatter him too in his history. And that he has flattered him here you will plainly find; not only by exaggerations, which are in some measure to be allowed to an orator; but in the affirming things which are directly contrary to truth. Such are those two remarkable passages of the French king's offering peace to the late Confederacy for the general good of Christendom (which not so much as a Frenchman who has common sense believes) and of his bombarding Genoa only to be revenged of its insolency and of its perfidiousness, which every man who has heard the story of M. Valdryon must laugh at. Now, since it is to be presumed that Monsieur Boileau will flatter him in his history, because it is plain that he has flattered him in his panegyrick, what are we to expect from Monsieur Pellisson whose sincerity is by no means so much talked of as the other's? I thought to have concluded here; but it comes into my mind to make two reflections upon the panegyrickal part of the enclosed.

The first is this, that since Monsieur Boileau, who is in the main a man of sincerity and a lover of truth, could not but flatter Lewis the Fourteenth when he commended him, we may conclude that it is impossible to give him a general commendation without flattery. For where a satiric poet paints what other man must not daub? The second reflec-

1. See below, p. 124.

tion is this, that since this panegyrick is scarce to be supported notwithstanding the most admirable genius of the author which shines throughout it ; and an art to which nothing can be added (remember that I speak of the original) and beyond which nothing can be desired ; you may easily conclude how extremely fulsome the rest of the panegyricks upon Lewis the Fourteenth must needs be, whose authors fall infinitely short of Boileau's either genius or art or virtue.

Severe as the criticism is in this letter, it is interesting to learn incidentally that Boileau's "sincerity" was "much talked of", and that he was regarded as "in the main a man of sincerity and a lover of truth" in England as well as in France; for his great reputation was founded on his "virtue" as well as on his "genius or art".

Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, in an *Epistle to Dorset*, persuading him to celebrate the victories of William of Orange, exclaims :

> Oh ! If in France this hero had been born,
> What glittering tinsel would his acts adorn !
> There'tis immortal fame and high renown
> To steal a country and to buy a town.
> .....
> Boyne would for ages be the painter's theme,
> The Gobelin's labour, and the poet's dream.
> .....
> Boileau with this would plume his artful pen,
> And can your Muse be silent ? Think again [1].

Edmund Arwaker went farther than that, and wrote *An Epistle to Monsieur Boileau inviting his Muse to forsake the French interest and celebrate the King of England* (1694). As it is not well-known, I may quote a few passages :

> Too long, great man, thy muse has tried in vain,
> Thy monarch's sinking credit to sustain ;
> And thou too long hast mis-employed thy pen,
> To make the worst appear the best of men ;
> A sullied fame to brighten and refine
> That never did with real lustre shine :
> While, as one, flattered by too fair a glass,
> Views but the wanted beauties of his face,
> So Lewis in thy lofty praise does see

1. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. IX, p. 340.

Not what he is, but what he wants to be.
And he must all his boasted glories own,
Not from himself derived but thee alone;
Whose muse so well does his mean deeds rehearse,
That he becomes immortal in thy verse:
But to thy verse no lasting form can give,
In recompense for what he does receive.
Leave, leave him then to raise his own renown,
And win the laurels that his temples crown:
A better cause and nobler subject choose,
That may inspire, as it employs, thy muse;
May with thy elevated sense agree,
And copious as thy boundless fancy be;
A hero, whose bright form may gild thy bays,
And more thy name than thou his glory raise.
See, see, his conquering sword great Nassau draws;
Not poorly bribes, but merits thy applause;
His brave exploits afford thy muse a theme
Equal to that, as that is worthy them.
.....
Then in his praises let famed Boileau join,
And to his side like Victory, incline;
Whose daring soul and ever-conquering sword
Will endless matter for thy verse afford.
But if thou wilt a servile labour choose,
Where arbitrary power enslaves thy muse;
And does thy thoughts to narrow bounds confine
Which Heaven for boundless subjects did design;
Know, our famed prince can his own trophies raise,
And counts as little as he wants thy praise.
Nor, if such means his glory could advance,
Would he have need to be obliged to France,
Since his own realms abound with men of sense
And famous for poetic excellence,
Whose lofty verse your humble strain exceeds
As much as his your meaner patron's deeds.

The closing lines are:

But our great monarch's praises should no more
Than his large soul be bounded by our shore;
Far as his victories his spreading fame should sound
And be in every tongue as every land renowned.
Then, Boileau, let thy muse begin her lofty flight,
Though she must still despair to reach the wondrous height.

We have seen that Boileau's weakness as a lyrical poet was noted in England by the critics. Dennis pointed out that Boileau had not "excelled" the ancients in the "greater ode"[1]. Prior combined the attack on Boileau the panegyrist with the criticism of Boileau the lyricist in that triumph of parody, *An English Ballad on the Taking of Namur by the King of Great Britain* (1695). The poem, which is a take-off on Boileau's *Ode sur la Prise de Namur*, is too well-known and too easily accessible for it to be necessary to refer to it at length. It is probably the best thing of its kind in English, and the way in which Prior pokes fun at Boileau's frigid Pindarism is as apposite as it is merciless[2]. The following stanza is characteristic for its fling at Boileau as a mere poetical mercenary :

> Pindar, that eagle, mounts the skies,
> While virtue leads the noble way ;
> Too like a vulture Boileau flies,
> Where sordid interest shows the prey.
> When once the poet's honour ceases,
> From reason far his transports rove ;
> And Boileau for eight hundred pieces,
> Makes Lewis take the wall of Jove .[3]

The other poem in which Prior returns to the charge against Boileau, *A Letter to Monsieur Boileau Despréaux occasioned by the victory at Blenheim*, London, 1704, seems to be less widely known, perhaps owing to Johnson's comparatively unfavourable judgment (in his *Life of Prior*) : "The burlesque of Boileau's *Ode on Namur* has, in some parts, such airiness and levity as will always procure it readers, even among those who cannot compare it with the original. The *Epistle to Boileau* is not so happy". Though this judgment is on the whole just, it will not

1. See above, p. 9.

2. Pope's *Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II*, vs. 228-231, shows how long the *Ode sur Namur* remained notorious.

3. " The poem appeared anonymously, for, as its author wrote to his publisher, Jacob Tonson, 'a secretary at thirty is hardly allowed the privilege of burlesque.' His friend Sir William Trumbull, at that time Secretary of State, undertook the arrangement of printing. 'Care will be taken here of the poetry', he wrote to Prior, 'and that it do not suffer in the printing, as it is pity it should. I see no reason why the author should be ashamed of battering Boileau's poem and reducing it, any more than we the castle, since it is our honour that everything that concerns Namur be on our side. However, I have enjoined Tonson silence.'... " Francis Bickley, *Life of Prior*, p. 34.

prevent the careful student of Boileau from relishing the triumphant way in which Boileau's contempt for the cacophonous names of the German and Dutch fortresses his royal master took so easily, is retorted upon him by Prior. The whole poem must be read in connection with Boileau's *Fourth Epistle* (to the King, 1672) just as the "English Ballad" must be read in connection with the *Ode sur Namur*. The poem begins with a repetition of the charge of mercinariness:

> Since, hired for life, thy servant muse must sing
> Successive conquests and a happy king;
> Must of a man immortal loudly boast,
> And bring him laurels, whatso'er they cost;
> What turn wilt thou employ, what colours lay
> On the event of that superior day
> In which our English subject's prosp'rous hand
> (So Jove did will, so Anna did command)
> Broke the proud column of thy master's praise,
> Which sixty winters had conspired to raise?

But he soon comes to an attack of greater subtlety:

> When thy young Muse invoked the tuneful nine,
> To say how Lewis did not pass the Rhine;
> What work had we with Wageninghen, Arnheim,
> Places that could not be reduced to rhyme?
> And though the poet made his last efforts,
> Wurts... who could mention in heroic... Wurts?
> But, tell me, hast thou reason to complain
> Of the rough triumphs of the last campaign?
> The Danube rescued, and the Empire saved?
> Say, is the majesty of verse retrieved?
> And would it prejudice thy softer vein,
> To sing the Princes Louis or Eugene?
> Is it too hard in happy verse to place
> The Vans and Vanders of the Rhine and Maes?
> Her warriors Anna sends from Tweed and Thames,
> That France may fall by more harmonious names.
> Canst thou not Hamilton or Lumley bear?
> Would Ingoldsby or Palmes offend thine ear?
> And is there not a sound in Malbro's name,
> Which thou and all thy brethren ought to claim,
> Sacred to verse, and sure of endless fame?[1]

1. *Cf.* Boileau, 4th Ep., vs. 1-20:
> En vain pour te louer ma muse toujours prête
> Vingt fois de la Hollande a tenté la conquête,

Later in the poem he rubs the gall into the wound as follows

> I grant old friend old foe (for such we are
> Alternate as the chance of peace or war)
> That we poetic folks, who must restrain
> Our measured sayings in an equal chain,
> Have troubles utterly unknown to those
> Who let their fancy loose in rambling prose.

> Ce pays, où cent murs n'ont pu te résister,
> Grand roi, n'est pas en vers si facile à dompter.
> Des villes que tu prends les noms durs et barbares
> N'offrent de toutes parts, que syllabes bizarres.
> Et l'oreille effrayée, il faut, depuis l'Yssel,
> Pour trouver un beau mot courir jusqu'à Tessel.
> Oui, partout de son nom chaque place munie
> Tient bon contre le vers, en détruit l'harmonie.
> Et qui peut, sans frémir, aborder Woërden?
> Quel vers ne tomberait au seul nom de Heusden?
> Quelle muse, à rimer en tous lieux disposée,
> Oserait approcher des bords du Zuiderzée?
> Comment, en vers heureux, assiéger Doësbourg,
> Zutphen, Wageninghen, Harderwic, Knotzembourg?
> Il n'est fort, entre ceux que tu prends par centaines,
> Qui ne puisse arrêter un rimeur six semaines.
> Et partout sur le Wahl, ainsi que sur le Leck,
> Le vers est en déroute, et le poète à sec.

ibid: vs. 29-30:

> Aujourd'hui, toutefois mon zèle m'encourage:
> Il faut, au moins, du Rhin tenter l'heureux passage.

ibid: vs. 141-158:

> Du fleuve ainsi dompté la déroute éclatante
> A Wurts jusqu'en son camp va porter l'épouvante.
> Wurts, l'espoir du pays et l'appui de ses murs;
> Wurts... Ah! quel nom, grand Roi, quel Hector que ce Wurts!
> Sans ce terrible nom, mal né pour les oreilles,
> Que j'allais à tes yeux étaler de merveilles!
> Bientôt on eût vu Skink, dans mes vers emporté,
> De ses fameux remparts démentir la fierté!
> Bientôt... Mais Wurts s'oppose à l'ardeur qui m'anime,
> Finissons, il est temps; aussi bien si la rime
> Allait mal à propos m'engager dans Arnheim,
> Je ne sais pour sortir de porte qu'Hildesheim.
> Oh! que le ciel, soigneux de notre poésie,
> Grand roi, ne nous fit-il plus voisins de l'Asie!
> Bientôt, victorieux de cent peuples altiers,
> Tu nous aurais fourni des rimes à milliers.
> Il n'est plaine en ces lieux, si sèche et si stérile
> Qui ne soit en beaux mots partout riche et fertile.

For instance now how hard it is for me
To make my matter and my verse agree!
In one great day on Hochstedt's fatal plain,
French and Bavarians twenty thousand slain;
Pushed through the Danube to the shores of Styx
Squadrons eighteen, battalions twenty-six;
Officers captive made and private men,
Of these twelve hundred, of those thousands ten.
Tents, ammunition, colours, carriages,
Cannons and kettle-drums — sweet numbers these.
But is it thus you English bards compose?
With Runick lays thus tag insipid prose?
And when you should your heroes' deeds rehearse,
Give us a Commissary's list in verse?
Why Faith, Despreaux, there's sense in what you say,
I told you where my difficulty lay:
So vast, so numerous were great Blenheim's spoils,
They scorn the bounds of verse, and mock the Muse's toils.
.....
O Poet, had it been Apollo's will,
That I had shared a portion of thy skill;
.....
Yet, Boileau, yet the lab'ring Muse should strive,
Beneath the shades of Malbro's wreaths to live:
.....
Arms and a queen to sing.

The rest of the poem is a panegyric on Queen Anne in the style of Boileau's on Louis.

In another of his poems, called *A Paraphrase from the French*, Prior returns to his twitting of Boileau in these lines:

Are not Boileau and Corneille paid
For panegyric writing?

The other episode in Boileau's English adventure was of an entirely opposite kind. The one we have just described was a phase of the state of belligerency existing between England and France; the one we have now to touch upon was an expression of friendship and homage. At the close of the seventeenth century, three English men of letters visited Boileau in Paris, and one of them left an account of his visit which makes the old French poet live and speak before our eyes.

It is delightful to know that Prior, who of all English writers

perhaps comes nearest to the French delicacy and lightness of touch, while preserving a truly English spirit and humour, met and talked with Boileau at an age when the erstwhile savage satirist, mellowed by the years, had begun to play a note of gentle, wistful humour curiously reminiscent of Prior's own [1]. His recently published correspondence dating from his period of residence in Paris as Secretary of the British Embassy (1697-1699), shows that he saw a good deal of Boileau, though we get the merest glimpse of what passed between them. On June 17, 1699, Prior writes to the Earl of Jersey : " One may be allowed to say a fine thing an hour before one goes to dine with Boileau, Fontenelle, l'abbé Régnier, and Mons[r] Dacier at the Baron's fine house at Charonne " [2], and on July 1, 1699, he writes to the same correspondent : " I am going to dine at Hauteoil (*sic*, Auteuil ?) with Boileau and the *beaux Esprits* " [3]. A little later in the same month and year he writes : " Patience, I live amongst my savants, and Boileau says I have more genius than all the Academy — good again ", to which Jersey replied : " If you don't come quickly away, Boileau and that flattering country will spoil you " [4]. Scanty as these notices are, they give more definite meaning to those lines in Prior's *Letter to Monsieur Boileau Despréaux Occasioned by the Victory at Blenheim* (1704), in which he addresses Boileau as

> ..... old friend, old foe (for such we are
> Alternate, as the chance of peace and war) [5].

The visits of Arthur Maynwaring and Joseph Addison to the aged Boileau are more fully reported. Our authority for the first is found in *The Life of Arthur Maynwaring*, written by Oldmixon only a few years after the event related. Oldmixon's digressiveness leads him to give more space in his account to interesting but tantalizing conjectures regarding Boileau's possible sources of knowledge of English literature than to the actual words that passed between Maynwaring and his host. However, the whole passage is worth quoting :

1. Notably in the *Tenth* and *Eleventh Epistles*, written in 1695.
2. L. G. Wickham Legg, *Matthew Prior : A Study of his Public Career and Correspondence* (1921), p. 293.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 295.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 300 and p. 84.
5. See above, p. 24. See, on this whole subject, besides Legg's work, Francis Bickley, *Life of Matthew Prior* (1914), pp. 69, 134.

Upon the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick, he went to Paris and was extremely well received there, being recommended not only by my Lords, the English ambassadors, but by his own shining worth. He became acquainted with the famous Monsieur Boileau, whose genius had the same bent with his own, that of Satire. Monsieur Boileau invited him to his country house, gave him a very handsome entertainment, and spoke much to him of the English poetry, but all by way of inquiry, for that French satirist affected to be as ignorant of the British muse, as if we were as barbarous as the Laplander, insomuch that a gentleman, a friend of Mr. Maynwaring's, visiting him some time after, upon the death of Mr. Dryden, Boileau said he was wonderfully pleased to see by the prints, that we paid such extraordinary honours to a poet in England, burying him at the public charge, and then asked the gentleman who that poet was, with as much indifference, as if he had never heard of Dryden's name, which is very unlikely he should not be as well acquainted with as we were with his own, Boileau very much frequenting the L. Montague's house when he was ambassador in France, and being an intimate friend to Mr. de la Fontaine, who lived some time in England, and has spoken very honourably of the English genius in his Fables. Now it is hardly possible that Boileau, who talked of his profession as much as M..... x, should converse with so many French gentlemen that had lived in England, lovers of wit and criticism, and have not heard a hundred times of Mr. Dryden. There is hardly a poet in England of the meanest intelligence, but has heard of even Katz, the Dutch poet, and surely Dryden, who was a finer poet than ever France produced, could not but be known by name to Mr. Boileau, though neither he nor any of his countrymen of worth would so forget themselves as to like any wit but their own. Mr. Boileau, in his conversation with Mr. Maynwaring acknowledged he had heard a great deal of the merit of our Tragedies but had no notion of our performance in other kinds of poetry, imputing that excellence of ours to sanguinary tempers as Rapin had done before calling us *Insulaires* by way of contempt, which no doubt Boileau's good breeding only prevented. Mr. Maynwaring gave him such an account of our plays and poems as surprised him, and yet, three or four years afterwards he pretended never to have heard of so great a man as Dryden[1].

The most vivid picture that an Englishman has given of Boileau is contained in a letter from Addison to Bishop Hough, written during his famous continental tour, and dated at Lyons, December, 1700. Extracts from the letter bearing on his visit to Boileau follow :

1. *Life of Arthur Maynwaring*, by Oldmixon. 1715 ed. pp. 16-18. 1st ed. 1712.

My Lord, I received the honour of your Lordship's letter at Paris, and am since got as far as Lyons in my way for Italy... The best company I have met with since my being in this country has been among the men of Letters.... Among other learned men I had the honour to be introduced to Mr. Boileau, who is now retouching his works and putting them out in a new impression. He is old and a little deaf, but talks incomparably well in his own calling. He heartily hates an ill poet, and throws himself into a passion when he talks of anyone that has not a high respect of Homer and Virgil. I don't know whether there is more of old age or truth in his censures on the French writers, but he wonderfully decries the present, and extols very much his former contemporaries, especially his two intimate friends, Arnaud and Racine. I asked him whether he thought *Télémaque* was not a good modern piece: he spoke of it with a great deal of esteem, and said that it gave us a better notion of Homer's way of writing than any translation of his works could do, but that it falls however infinitely short of the Odyssey, for Mentor, says he, is eternally preaching, but Ulysses shows everything in his character and behaviour that the other is still pressing on us by his precepts and instructions. He said the punishment of bad kings was very well invented, and might compare with anything of that nature in the 6th Aeneid, and that the deceit put on Télémaque's pilot to make him misguide his master is more artful and poetical than the death of Palinurus. I mention his discourse on this author because it is at present the book that is everywhere talked of, and has a great many partisans for and against it in this country. I found him as warm in crying up this man and the good poets in general, as he has been in censuring the bad ones of his time, as we commonly observe that the man who makes the best friend is the worst enemy. He talked very much of Corneille, allowing him to be an excellent poet, but at the same time none of the best tragic writers, for that he declaimed too frequently, and made very fine descriptions often when there was no occasion for them. Aristotle, says he, proposes two passions that are proper to be raised by tragedy, terror and pity, but Corneille endeavours a new one, which is admiration. He instanced in his *Pompey* (which he told us the late Duke of Condé thought the best tragedy that was ever written), where in the first scene the king of Egypt runs into a very pompous and long description of the battle of Pharsalia, though he was then in a great hurry of affairs and had not himself been present at it...

I am, my Lord, your Lordship's &c.

J. Addison[1].

1. Addison : Works (Hurd ed.), Vol. V, p. 332. See Tickell's *Life of Joseph Addison* (Preface to first edition of Addison's Works, 1721) : " Our country owes it to him (Addison) that the famous Monsieur Boileau first conceived an opinion of the English genius for Poetry by perusing the present

Every word of this life-like picture is valuable. It gives a personal corroboration to the ideal character of Boileau that might be constructed from the self-revelations of his poems. The hatred of an "ill poet", the passionate denunciation of those who show disrespect for Homer and Virgil, the loyal praise of his friends Arnaud and Racine, the balanced judgment on Corneille, the still alert interest in contemporary literature evidenced in the shrewd verdict on *Télémaque*, — all the characteristics of the spirited young author of the *Art Poétique* and the *Ninth Satire* still distinguish the literary dictator of Europe in the days when his sun is setting. The young Englishman who sat at his feet was never to forget that glorious interview. Years afterwards, when he criticized Fénelon's famous novel in *The Tatler*[1], he remembered and utilized the remarks which Boileau had made on that book in his hearing. Can we doubt that if Addison — along with Pope and Dennis — is one of the Englishmen who most thoroughly underwent the influence of Boileau, it is in great part due to the fact that not only did he, like all his contemporaries, turn over the pages of Boileau day and night, but since that December day in Paris, there never departed from his mind's eye the actual presence of the ardent old enthusiast for literature?

he made him of the *Musae Anglicanae*. It has been currently reported, that this famous French poet, among the civilities he showed Mr. Addison on that occasion, affirmed that he would not have written against Perrault, had he before seen such excellent pieces by a modern hand. Such a saying would have been impertinent and unworthy of Boileau whose dispute with Perrault turned chiefly upon some passages in the ancients, which he rescued from the misinterpretations of his adversary. The true and natural compliment made by him was that those books had given him a very new idea of the English Politeness, and that he did not question but there were excellent compositions in the native language of a country that professed the Roman genius in so eminent a degree". Johnson, in his *Life of Addison*, comments on the above passage thus: "He (Addison) afterwards presented the collection to Boileau, who from that time conceived, says Tickell, an opinion of the English genius for poetry. Nothing is better known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation".

1. *Op. cit.* No. 156.

CHAPTER III

DURING THE AGE OF POPE

It is to be hoped that the preceding chapters have disposed of the traditional view that Boileau's influence in England — whatever it may have amounted to — only came into operation after Dryden's death. Yet this over-hasty generalization was no doubt prompted by a dim perception of an unquestioned truth; it was during what is called the Age of Pope that Boileau's sway in England was most unchallenged and that his work as a whole met with the most intelligent appreciation and the closest imitation. For the purposes of this study, the Age of Pope has been taken somewhat arbitrarily as a designation for the period extending between the year 1711 and the middle year of the century. From the point of view of our investigation, this is not unreasonable; for, though Pope had published before 1711, it was not until that year that a work bearing the impress of Boileau's influence appeared from his pen; while, at the other extreme, though Pope had been in the grave for six years in 1750, it is only at that date that a revolt against the almost uniform Boileau-worship of the preceding forty years begins to be perceptible. The year 1711 makes a particularly suitable starting-point, for not only does it mark the end of Boileau's life, but it sees the publication, on the one hand, of the first complete translation into English of his works, and, on the other, of one of the most famous products of his influence, Pope's *Essay on Criticism*.

Ozell, in his Dedication to Halifax of the translation of Boileau's complete works[1], says: "The favourable reception you were pleased to give to the translation of M. Boileau's *Lutrin* has emboldened me to put his whole works under your Lordship's protection. It was your Lordship's patronage which recommended that poem to the public, who are justly possessed of a notion that whatever

1. See Book II, p. 178.

my Lord Halifax is not offended with may deserve their approbation. The booksellers, from the success of that piece, took a resolution to get all the other works of that celebrated author translated." [1] DesMaizeaux, in the letter to Addison preceding his "Life of Boileau" in the same work, says: "Several parts of the writings of Monsieur Boileau Despréaux having been formerly translated by very eminent hands and with great justice to the author, a general inclination hath from thence been raised among the curious to see all his works in the English tongue. This curiosity is here satisfied." [2] In the "Life" itself the following interesting passage occurs: "It must be confessed that nothing is more glorious for him (i. e. Boileau) than the approbation he has met with in England where a foreign author would in vain attempt to impose upon the people's judgment. A too favourable prepossession is not much to be feared; and therefore we may say that M. Despréaux is beholden to nothing but his own merit for those advantageous notions which are entertained of him. The present translation of his works will make him still better known. If he could be read in his own tongue he would undoubtedly be a gainer, but equitable readers will of themselves make the necessary allowances and forbear to condemn Monsieur Despréaux before they are sure it is he that speaks and not his translators. But this inconvenience is the less to be feared, since the greater part has passed through the hands of Mr. Ozell, who some time since made a version of the *Lutrin* which has met with a general reception." [3] The quotations leave no doubt as to the widespread popularity that Boileau now enjoyed; and there can be no question but that his popularity was considerably increased by the publication of his complete works in English. The work had two later editions in the eighteenth century, one in 1736, the other in 1752. [4]

In the Age of Pope, it is Pope himself whom we are naturally most anxious to hear from regarding Boileau, especially as it soon became common to call him "the English Boileau". The fact that one poet is much indebted to another is not always a guarantee of critical tribute from the first, so we are pleased (from the human point of view) to hear Pope calling Boileau, "the first poet of the French, in the same manner as Virgil of the Latin; Malherbe,

1. *Works of Monsieur Boileau*, London, 1712, v. I. Dedication.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. I, pp. I-II.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. I, p. CLXVIII.
4. For further details on this translation, see Book II, pp. 177-190.

longo intervallo, the second. "[1] As this high praise occurs in a remark which continues immediately thus : " Racine's character is justness and correctness ; Corneille's passion and life ; Corneille stumbles oftener and has greater excellencies ", we cannot doubt that Boileau is meant to be placed above the two dramatists. Possibly the praise may sound fainter in another casual remark that Spence noted down : " Régnier is a very good poet. The French tongue does very well for satire ; at least, for the *sermoni propriora* style, that all satire ought to be written in. Horace's supper, Boileau's Festin, and Lord Rochester's Feast, all very good, — Rochester, in his *Satire on Man*, very much improves on his pattern in Boileau. Boileau evidently the best of the French poets. His notes very useful, but show that he was an ill-natured man. So did his crying down Huet. "[2] This passage will be important to remember when we come to consider the influence of Boileau upon Pope. [3] There is a reference to the *Lutrin* in the Postcript to the *Odyssey*. Unfortunately, the question arises as to whether Pope was competent to be a critic of French poetry. Did he know French well enough ? The editor of Spence's *Anecdotes* thinks there is no doubt that " he understood French sufficiently to read it and relish their poetry ; "[4] yet he adds that Voltaire, a fairly good witness, said : " Pope, whom I was intimately acquainted with, could hardly read French, and spoke not one syllable of our language, not being capable of doing it. " Pope's own statement, contained in a letter to Bolingbroke (April 9, 1724), seems to reconcile these views : " It is but this week that I have been well enough in my head to read the poem of the League[5] with the attention it deserves..... I cannot pretend to judge with any exactness of the beauties of a foreign language which I understand but imperfectly. "[6]

Addison is to be classed with Pope and Dennis as one of the English writers who underwent most deeply Boileau's influence. As we saw at the close of the last chapter, this influence was partly strengthened in his case by direct personal contact with Boileau. The influence of Boileau on the separate lines of Addisonian

1. Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
3. See Bk. IV, ch. IX.
4. Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 270, note.
5. Voltaire's *La Henriade* (published 1723).
6. *Works of Pope*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, v. VII, p. 401.

criticism will be traced in a later Book; we have to do here with general critical references to Boileau, and these, though fairly numerous, are not usually very significant in Addison. In *The Spectator*, No. 47, there is a reference to Dennis's translation of Boileau's *Fourth Satire*, with a quotation from it; in No. 70 Addison shows his wide reading in Boileau by relating the story (which appears in Boileau's *Réflexions sur Longin*) of Molière reading his plays to his old servant to get her criticism; in No. 183, he calls Boileau "the most correct poet among the moderns"; in No. 209, he has the following mingled praise and rebuke for Boileau as a satirist: "As the poet (he has been quoting Simonides' *Satire on Women*) has shewn a great penetration in this diversity of female characters, he has avoided the fault which Juvenal and Monsieur Boileau are guilty of, the former in his Sixth and the latter in his last Satire, where they have endeavoured to expose the sex in general, without doing justice to the valuable part of it. Such levelling satires are of no use to the world, and for this reason I have often wondered how the French author above-mentioned, who was a man of exquisite judgment and a lover of virtue could think human nature a proper subject for satire in another of his celebrated pieces, which is called the *Satire upon Man*. What vice or frailty can a discourse correct, which censures the whole species alike, and endeavours to shew by some superficial strokes of wit that brutes are the most excellent creatures of the two? A satire should express nothing but what is corrigible, and make due discrimination between those who are and those who are not the proper objects of it;" in No. 229, he places the translations of Sappho's *Ode to Lesbia* by Catullus, Boileau and Ambrose Phillips side by side, with these remarks on the Bolevian rendering: "The reader will see that this is rather an imitation than a translation. The circumstances do not lie so thick together, and follow one another with that vehemence and emotion as in the original. In short, Monsieur Boileau has given us all the poetry, but not all the passion of this famous fragment"; in No. 303, in defending Milton's similes, he refers to and quotes from Boileau's *Réflexions sur Longin*; in No. 548, he quotes again from the *Satire upon Man*; in No. 592, he places Boileau the critic in distinguished company ("I have a great esteem for a true critic such as Aristotle and Longinus among the Greeks, Horace and Quintilian among the Romans, Boileau and Dacier among the French"); and in Dialogue 2 of his *Miscellaneous Prose Writings*, occurs the following: "She (Chastity) is represented in the habit of a Roman matron,

Matronae praeter faciem nil cernere possis,
Caetera, ni Catia est, demissa veste tegentis. S. I, 2, 94-95.

That *ni Catia est*, says Cynthio, is a beauty unknown to most of our English satirists. Horace knew how to stab with address, and to give a thrust when it was least expected, Boileau has nicely imitated him in this, as well as his other beauties. But our English libellers are for hewing a man downright and for letting him see at a distance that he is to look for no mercy. I own to you, says Eugenius, I have often admired this piece of art in the two satirists you mention, and have been surprised to meet with a man in a satire that I have never in the least expected to find there. They have a particular way of hiding their ill-nature, and introduce a criminal rather to illustrate a precept or passage than out of any seeming design to abuse him. " [1] This last passage and the one from *The Spectator* No. 209 show considerable critical acumen; for in them Addison puts his finger on Boileau's greatest weakness as a poet and satirist (the too general character of his satire) and on his greatest excellence (the urbane adroitness of his rapier-thrust). Addison saw that here was the lesson that Boileau (along with Horace) had especially to teach the English satirist; and I think it can be shown that the lesson was mainly learned from Boileau. [2]

There is hardly one of the distinguished contemporaries of Pope and Dryden who has not formed an opinion about Boileau or at least read his works. Philosophers as well as pure littérateurs bring their tribute. Shaftesbury, while offering the usual incense up to the idol of nationalism as follows, " ('tis) evident our natural genius shines above that airy, neighbouring nation ", has to admit " that with time, pains and industry, they have sought Politeness and studied to give the Muses their due body and proportion, as well as the natural adornments of correctness, chastity and grace of style. From the plain model of the ancients, they have raised a noble satirist, Boileau, " [3] and again, " The greatest masters of art, in every kind of writing, were eminent in the critical practice... Among the moderns, a Boileau and a Corneille were sufficient

1. Horace, Juvenal, Boileau are joined in *The Guardian*, No. 137, as writers " who endeavoured to show that true nobility consists in virtue, not in birth. "

2. See Bk. IV, ch. IX.

3. *Advice to an Author*.

precedents in the case before us. They applied their criticism with just severity even to their own works. "[1] Edward Young, author of *Night Thoughts*, not only borrowed fairly liberally, as we shall see, from Boileau in his *Love of Fame*, but criticized him as follows: "Boileau has joined both the Roman satirists with great success;[2] but has too much of Juvenal in his very serious *Satire on Women*, which should have been the gayest of all. An excellent critic[3] of our own commends Boileau's closeness, or, as he calls it, pressness, particularly; whereas it appears to me that repetition is his fault if any fault should be imputed to him."[4] Gay glances at Boileau in his *Third Epistle* (to William Pulteney):

> But let me not forget Corneille, Racine,
> Boileau's strong sense and Molière's humorous scene.

Parnell thinks less highly of *Le Lutrin* than most of his contemporaries (but compare Tom Brown, above) and is more explicit in his criticism than most of them: "I rose from a late perusal of the Lutrin of Boileau with a strong and pleasing conviction, not only of Pope's immeasurable superiority over the French poet, in poetical conception of his subject, in brilliant fancy, variety of character, elegance of allusion; but also in good sense, and truth, and adherence to nature; Boileau's ground-plot is mean, his sentiments strained, and his picture overcharged; he is struggling for an effect that his subject does not admit, nor his poetical powers enable him to supply."[5] Thomas Gray, visiting Rome in May, 1740, writes to Ashton: "Boileau's Discord dwelt in a college of monks. At present the lady is in the conclave."[6] Later, when he returned to Cambridge, he described to West an imaginary conversation between the books in his library from which we may perhaps conclude at least that he possessed a copy of Boileau; when Euclid remarks, "Punctum est, cuius nulla est..." Boileau breaks in with, "Peste soit de cet homme avec son Punctum! I wonder any

1. *Miscellanies* (ch. V).
2. Notice how this idea keeps recurring.
3. Who is this critic?
4. Preface to *The Love of Fame*.
5. *Poetical Works of Thomas Parnell*. Aldine ed. London, n. d., p. 56 (note 2).
6. *The Correspondence of Gray, Walpole, West and Ashton*, ed. by Paget Toynbee. Oxford, 1915, vol. I, p. 293.

man of sense will have a mathematician in his study. "[1] Among the major figures of the time, only Swift[2], Defoe and Thomson are almost wholly silent on Boileau.

Minor authors have, for our purpose, a significance almost as great as their betters. Among those of the earlier Georgian age Boileau's works were evidently well-thumbed books. The eighth edition of Waller's poems in 1711 contains a Life of the Author, which has the following unfavourable criticism on Boileau : " For in a hundred places one may see that he (Waller) follows the ancients, though never servilely as Mr. Boileau and other French poets have done, whose merit consists chiefly in their thefts from antiquity ". In the *Memoirs of Literature* (vol. VI, art. 29, p. 226 ff.) we get a review of the slightest kind of the Billiot edition of Boileau's works which appeared in Paris in 1713; it is merely a brief statement (covering one and a half pages) of the contents of the edition and of its variations from earlier ones; there is no criticism, but the entry is an additional link in the evidence of Boileau's popularity in England.

Elijah Fenton, in his *Epistle to Thomas Lambard*, makes a boastful young poet exclaim :

> Boileau's a mushroom if compared to me,
> And, Horace, I dispute the palm with thee !

Richardson Pack, in his *Essays on Study and Conversation in two letters to David Campbell, Esq.*, (1719), says : " For satire, Dryden, Rochester, and Boileau have excelled all the moderns. "[3] Gildon, in his *Laws of Poetry* (1721), speaks of " the great Boileau who has in his writings abundantly shown how very unfit Monsieur Perrault was for so great an undertaking " (i. e. the defence of the moderns)[4], and thinks that Roscommon's lines :

> The weighty bullion of one sterling line,
> Drawn to French wire, would through whole pages shine,

" will not reach all our poets ; as it will not be over all the French ; for Boileau, I fancy, will very well bear an exception. "[5] In Tamworth Reresby's *Miscellany of Ingenious Thoughts and Reflec-*

1. *The Correspondence of Gray, Walpole, West and Ashton*, vol. II, p. 19.
2. See, however, p. 176.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 101.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

tions (1721), Boileau's generous actions in behalf of Patru and Corneille are related with this comment: "Although nothing ever appeared in poetry finer than Mr. Boileau's works, yet methinks these actions are still more extraordinary, and conduce more to the glory of his name and memory."[1] In the chapter entitled "General Reflections upon Style and Eloquence", in the same work, after interesting remarks on the Chevalier de Méré, Costar, Voiture and Balzac (there is an unusual amount of mention of French literary figures, especially Montaigne, in this book), he makes, apropos of the latter two, this little excursion into the study of Boileau's "sources": "Mr. Boileau had so great and intimate a conversation with the writings of both these authors, and so happy a genius, that he could form himself exactly upon their model. As two letters of his are masterpieces of their kind, I believe a copy of them will not prove unpleasant to the reader. Mr. Boileau introduced them to the world by another he writ to the Duke of Vivonne." On p. 162, he says: "The two following orations, the one of Mr. Pavillon, the other of Mr. Boileau, upon their admission into the Academy at Paris, are esteemed good pieces of the kind."

Blackmore, who, as we shall see, crossed swords with Boileau on the thorny subject of the Christian religion as material for poetry, thought that Dennis was "superior in critical abilities" to Boileau.[2] Lyttelton, in a poem *To the Rev. Dr. Ayscough written from Paris*, 1728[3], reverts to the old mockery of Boileau as a base panegyrist:

> Here Boileau, strong in sense and sharp in wit,
> Who, from the ancients, like the ancients, writ,
> Permission gained inferior vice to blame,
> By flattering incense to his master's fame.

Walter Harte, in his *Essay on Satire* (1730), after describing the rise of modern satire in Italy under "Medici and Leo", goes on with this interesting sketch of French satire, including Boileau:

> Then westward too by slow degrees confest,
> Where boundless Rabelais made the world his jest,

1. *Pleasant Narratives*, pp. 235-239.
2. Preface to *Alfred* (1723). See below, pp. 311-12.
3. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XIV, p. 172.

Marot had nature, Régnier force and flame!
But swallowed all in Boileau's matchless fame!
Extensive soul! who ranged all learning o'er,
Present and past.... and yet found room for more.
Full of new sense, exact in every page,
Unbounded, and yet sober in thy rage.
Strange fate! Thy solid sterling of two lines,
Drawn to our tinsel, through whole pages shines![1]

Farther on in Harte's poem occur these two lines in reference to Pope:

(He) Warmed Boileau's sense with Britain's genuine fire,
And added softness to Tassoni's lyre.

This last couplet and the quotation that follows show — if further proof were necessary — that the eighteenth century, even in the hey-day of neo-classicism, was quite able to distinguish between Boileau and the inspired singers of the world. An anonymous *Collection of Pieces*, published in 1732, contains (as an answer to an epigram ending:

Admire a Virgil and disdain a Pope.)

another epigram, which runs:

If none must be admired but poets born,
Admire a Homer and a Virgil scorn;
Admire a Horace and contemn Boileau;
Admire a Dryden and despise a Rowe.

In 1735, John Sican, writing to Swift from Paris, says: "Upon reading Boileau's account of the Petit (*sic*) Maison or Bedlam of Paris, I was tempted to go see it."[2] Thomas Blackwell in his *Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), has several references to Boileau. He says the *Italia Liberata* (of Trissino?) is "no more read than Chapelain's *Pucelle* would be without Boileau."[3] Again, Boileau is quoted on the need of supernatural machinery in epics.[4] Speaking of Virgil's being deterred from writ-

1. The sting of these last two lines will be apparent to any one who recalls Roscommon's couplet, quoted on p. 36.
2. *Correspondence of Swift*, v. V, p. 268.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 33 (2nd ed., 1736).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

ing a poem on the old Roman wars by the asperity of the old Roman names, he says, "they were almost as frightful as Boileau's *Woerden*, or the hideous *Wurts*, of whose name he so woefully complains as quite scaring his muse", after which he quotes six lines from Boileau's *Fourth Epistle*.[1] In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1738, a writer attacking lampoons on the government, says, "Boileau, who was a severe satirist, lays it down that such poems must not offend the state or conscience." Elizabeth Montague, in a letter of July 26, 1743, says: "If I was as good a poet as Boileau I would complain of l'Embarras de Londres and also of l'Embarras de la Campagne, etc."[2] and in one, dated January, 1751, she quotes (in French) parts of *Le Lutrin*.[3] Colley Cibber, writing to Samuel Richardson on January 16, 1750, says: "Yesterday I saw our equal delight Miss Muse, who has not only opened her leaves to a full blow of her rose, but has taken Boileau to task for regretting his inclination to the nine ladies, who had so lavishly bestowed their favours on him. In a word she has translated, improved and swaddled him for his ungrateful error..."[4] Brown's *Essay on Satire* contains the following lines:

> More happy France: immortal Boileau there
> Supported genius with a sage's care.
> Him with her love propitious Satire blest,
> And breathed her airs divine into his breast.
> Fancy and sense to form his line conspire,
> And faultless judgment guides the purest fire[5].

Boileau's fame is graphically represented at its apogee in two curious devices of Akenside's invention, published in *Dodsley's Museum* in 1746. These are "The Balance of Poets" and "The Temple of Modern Fame."[6] In the latter, Boileau comes twentieth in a list of the twenty-four most famous men of modern times including monarchs, scientists, priests, philosophers and men of letters. Shakespeare, Dante, Corneille and Racine do not appear in the list. Tasso and Ariosto (rather strangely for the eighteenth century)

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 302.
2. E. J. Climenson, *Elizabeth Montague, her Correspondence from 1720-1761*, v. I, p. 154.
3. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 282.
4. *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, v. II, p. 171.
5. Dodsley's *Poems by Several Hands*, v. III, p. 336.
6. See Appendix C.

come before Boileau; on the other hand Boileau has outstripped Bacon, Milton, Cervantes and Molière. Boileau would be in luck if he could find any one to give him such a high rating to-day. "The Balance of Poets" is a much more elaborate affair. Each of twenty poets (ancient and modern) is given a certain mark out of a possible maximum of twenty in each of the following categories, Critical Ordonnance, Pathetic Ordonnance, Dramatic Ordonnance, Incidental Expression, Taste, Colouring, Versification, Moral, and Final Estimate. What relation the mark given in the Final Estimate column bears to the marks in the other columns, I am unable to discover. It is not simply the average of the latter. At all events Boileau gets 12 as Final Estimate, being in the same class as Euripides and Tasso and outclassing Lucretius and Terence who get 10 as Final Estimate. Ariosto, Dante, Horace, Pindar, Pope, Racine and Sophocles are only one mark ahead of him. This result is surprising; it bears no relation to Boileau's ranking in "The Temple of Modern Fame"; moreover, the average of his marks in the separate categories is considerably higher than the average of many of those who are much higher than him in the Final Estimate. Perhaps neither of these curiosities of criticism is to be taken very seriously. Still, what is significant of opinion in the mid-eighteenth century is that, in both cases, Boileau should be *dans cette galère* at all.

CHAPTER IV

DURING THE AGE OF JOHNSON

HETERODOXY

The same periodical which exalted Boileau above Milton and Molière also cast the first stone at his reputation, and in the very same year. This epoch-making event was not mentioned in its chronological place in the last Chapter in order to preserve undisturbed for the moment the impression of uniform favour in which Boileau was held during the first part of the century, and also in order to avoid scattering the story of Boileau's decline from that favour over several chapters. We must now cast back a few years before 1750 and concentrate our attention on that story from its beginnings down to the end of the century. We shall then return to our starting-point and show how far from total that decline from favour was by following another Boileau-trail, a primrose path of adulation, down to the same terminus. The year 1746 is the cross-roads where Boileau's reputation forks.

When the term "uniform favour" is applied to the opinion held of Boileau in the first half of the century, it is not intended to imply that English admiration of Boileau was ever wholly indiscriminating. In fact, the first three chapters of this Book are full of reminders that there was always a sturdy independence about the English attitude to the great dictator beyond the Channel. Rymer called him a "man of straw compared with my Lord Rochester"; everybody, including Dennis, roared with laughter at his excursions into lyric poetry; during the wars he was sneered at as a paid fawner on his royal master; the admirable *Lutrin* was not admired by everybody; even Addison found some flaws in him as a satirist; and he received a general drubbing at the hands of Tom Brown. But all these criticisms (except the last, which, coming from Tom Brown, did not count) were merely incidental; they were often taken back in the next breath by their maker; they did nothing to unsettle Boileau's general position as

a great poet, and, above all, as a model of "correctness". The movement we are about to trace attacked these central citadels of his fame.

This is not the place to rehearse the causes which led to the gradual dissolution of the neo-classic tradition from the middle of the century onwards.[1] The general tendency in all human affairs for the pendulum to swing backwards after swinging forwards; the more particular influence in that century of the study of aesthetics, of wider knowledge of the literature of the Middle Ages and of foreign nations; these causes which were operative all over Europe were re-inforced in England, and their action accelerated, by the resurgence of the strong, romantic, national tradition. It was absurd to suppose that Boileau could long crowd Shakespeare out of a Temple of Fame built by English hands. Yet, on the other hand, there is this curious and ironical circumstance about the turn of the tide in Boileau's fortunes in England; it seems to have become pronounced only after some encouragement towards a re-valuation of Boileau's place as a poet had been given by several of the most eminent of Boileau's own compatriots, notably Voltaire and Fontenelle. It is true that Voltaire, at least, often spoke of Boileau as though he were beyond criticism; and he was the author of the famous "Ne disons pas de mal de Nicolas, ça porte malheur". The fact remains that, in some of his most responsible utterances (and notably in his *Discours de réception* at the French Academy, which will be noticed presently) he challenged the truth of his own dictum by handling Boileau with unwonted freedom; and it is these pronouncements from the French Olympus itself which seem to have emboldened the English critics to speak out at last.

Yet the first shot fired by the anti-Boileau forces did not come from Voltaire. In April, 1746, there appeared in *Dodsley's Museum* an essay on "Correctness", in which revolt against French literary standards is for the first time very marked. "Were I a Frenchman", says the writer, "concerned for the poetical glory of my country, I should lament its unmusical language... Their Alexandrine measure, which they call heroic, has its pause or caesura in every line at the same place; so that two hammers on a smith's anvil make just as much music as Racine or Boileau". This severe

1. For a thorough treatment of this subject, see Saintsbury's monumental *History of Criticism*, vol. III, Bk VII.

(and, incidentally, very unintelligent) attack on the Alexandrine was an attack on one of Boileau's central defences; for he had always been especially praised (and still is by many people) as a great versifier. But the article does not stop with demolishing French versification. " It was too great an attention to French criticism ", it goes on, " that hindered our poets in Charles II's time from comprehending the genius and acknowledging the authority of Milton. " [1]

Only a month after the publication of this anti-French article in England, Voltaire saw fit, on the occasion of his reception into the French Academy (May 9, 1746) to speak of Boileau in the following terms: " Incapable peut-être du sublime qui élève l'âme et du sentiment qui l'attendrit, mais fait pour éclairer ceux à qui la nature accorda l'un et l'autre, laborieux, sévère, précis, pur, harmonieux, il devint, enfin, le poète de la Raison. " [2] The effect of this speech in England was immediate and important. In July, 1746, *The Gentleman's Magazine* published " A Letter concerning M. Voltaire's Admission into the Royal Academy at Paris ", in which is quoted part of Voltaire's *discours de réception*, including the passage on Boileau. [3] In *Dodsley's Museum* for September 13, 1746, appeared " The Temple of Modern Fame, a Vision ", in which occurs the following: " At the next trumpet, the tutelary of France went out with the assured air that was natural to her, and brought in a tall, slender man in a large wig, with a very fine sneer upon his face. She said his name was Boileau and that nobody could pretend to dispute that place with him. However, the stately genius of England opposed her; her remonstrances prevailed, and Pope took the place which Boileau thought belonged to him. " [4] The same periodical for December 20, 1746, published the whole of Voltaire's *discours de réception* in English. [5]

1746 was evidently an *année terrible* for the law-giver of Parnassus. Yet it was merely a preliminary skirmish to the grand attack, made ten years later by Joseph Warton in that landmark of critical history, *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope.* [6] " We do not, it should seem " runs the historic passage, " suf-

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 88.
2. *Œuvres de Voltaire*, Moland ed., v. XXIII, pp. 211-212.
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. XVI, p. 342.
4. *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 488.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 228.
6. *Op. cit.*, vol. I, Dedication, p. II.

ficiently attend to the difference there is betwixt a man of wit, a man of sense, and a true Poet... a clear head and acute understanding are not sufficient, alone, to make a Poet; the most solid observations on human life, expressed with the utmost elegance and brevity, are morality and not poetry; the Epistles of Boileau in rhyme are no more poetical than the Characters of La Bruyère in prose; and it is a creative and glowing imagination, *acer spiritus ac vis* and that alone that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which so few possess and which so few can properly judge." Then, a few lines farther, we see whence came the courage to make this brave stand. "The sublime and the pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy. What is there transcendently sublime or pathetic in Pope?... And because I am, perhaps, unwilling to speak out in plain English, I will adopt the following passage of Voltaire, which, in my opinion, as exactly characterizes Pope as it does his model Boileau, for whom it was originally designed"; and then follows the judgment on Boileau quoted above.

Coming down to particulars, Warton criticizes Boileau's unlucky *Ode sur Namur* in such a way as to draw wider and more damning conclusions from its unluckiness than any English parodist of that piece had yet done. "When Boileau attempted an Ode, he exhibited a glaring proof of what has frequently been hinted in the course of this essay, that the writer whose grand characteristical talent is satiric or moral poetry, will never succeed with any merit in the higher branches of his art. In his Ode on the taking of Namur are instances of the bombastic, of the prosaic and of the puerile" (he gives examples at the foot of the page). "And it is no small confirmation of the ruling passion of this author that he could not conclude his Ode but with a severe stroke on his old antagonist Perrault, though the majesty of this species of composition is so much injured by descending to personal satire."[1] The following epoch-making remark, though more important for the general history of criticism, is yet pertinent to our subject, as it engulfs Boileau along with others: "In no polished nation, after criticism has been much studied and the rules of writing established, has any very extraordinary work ever appeared. This has visibly been the case in Greece, in Rome and in France after Aristotle, Horace and Boileau had written their Arts of Poetry."[2]

1. *Essay on Pope*, v. I, p. 65.
2. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 198.

We have seen that it was a favourite exercise of English critics to compare Rochester's *Satire on Man* with his original in Boileau, generally to the disadvantage of the latter; but none took quite the same line that Warton did in this judgment: "That Rochester should write a satire on man I am not surprised; it is the business of the libertine to degrade his species and debase the dignity of human nature and thereby destroy the most efficacious incitements to lovely and laudable actions; but that a writer of Boileau's purity of manners should represent his kind in the dark and disagreeable colours he has done with all the malignity of a discontented Hobbist, is a lamentable perversion of fine talents and is a real injury to society." [1] And he voices the growing dislike of Boileau's critico-satirical militancy: "If Boileau ridicules and rallies vile writers with more seeming pleasantry and good humour, yet we ought to recollect that Boileau was the aggressor and had received no previous abuse, when he fell upon Cotin, de Pure, Quinault, St. Amand, Colletet, Chapelain and Théophile. It was on this account that the Duc de Montausier, a man of rigid virtue, so much condemned Boileau that it was with great difficulty he was brought to read his works and be reconciled to him." (He goes on to quote Sat. IX, 89 f. of Boileau: "Laissez mourir un fat dans son obscurité." [2])

In the following passage we see Fontenelle coming to re-inforce Voltaire: "Boileau's chief talent was the Didactic. His fancy was not the predominant faculty of his mind. Fontenelle has thus characterized him: 'Il était grand et excellent versificateur, pourvu cependant que cette louange se renferme dans ses beaux jours, dont la différence avec les autres est bien marquée; il faisait souvent dire Hélas! et Holà! mais il n'était pas grand poète, si l'on entend par ce mot, comme on le doit, celui qui fait, qui invente, qui crée.'" [3]

We shall find Warton presently saying much pleasanter things about Boileau; but none of his compliments can invalidate the fact that, in the above passages, Boileau was for the first time stripped of his poet's bays. In saying that "fancy was not the predominant faculty of his mind" Warton, of course, is not implying that earlier critics had ever pretended that Boileau *had* "fancy". The point is that to those critics a writer could be

1. *Essay on Pope*, v. II, p. 46.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 211.
3. *Ibid.*, v. I, pp. 189-190.

a poet *without* " fancy ". Warton is restoring " fancy " to its place as one of the indispensable ingredients of poetry ; and, not finding it in Boileau, is denying him the very name of poet.

Boileau's progress downwards along his evil trail — the reader is reminded that there is also a good one — is henceforth constant. In December 1760, *The Royal Magazine* publishes another of those " visions " of the " Temple of Taste " that entertained the artistic slumbers of so many people of that time. " A few nights ago ", this happy dreamer tells us, " I happened to amuse myself with Montesquieu's Essay upon Taste just before I went to bed ; and his reasonings dwelt so strong upon my mind, that I soon after beheld a vision, which made a very lively impression upon my imagination. I thought myself all on a sudden transported to an island which, by the force of enchantment, flourished in every age of the world, tho' not always with equal lustre. The name of this island was the Island of Genius, and in the midst of it stood a temple dedicated to Taste. There was a vast concourse of people before the door ; but a person attended at the entrance, who refused admittance to all such as did not bring a passport signed by some approved author, ancient or modern. All those who were recommended by Aristotle and Longinus were immediately let in. Some brought passports signed Boileau, the validity of some of which was disputed. Segrais claimed admittance as a pastoral poet ; but was told that nobody read his works, and that an author who was read by nobody could never expect to be admitted into the temple of Taste. Quinault who has been severely censured by the above-mentioned author, was almost afraid to offer himself, and with a trembling hand presented a passport signed Voltaire, which procured him immediate admittance. Tasso, so much decried by the above-mentioned satirist [1], was admitted by the same authority. The English poets who modestly declined offering themselves first, had their entrance disputed by the French and Italians, who asserted that, tho' they were inferior to them in genius, they greatly surpassed them in taste ; but Aristotle and Longinus interposing in the dispute, gave them an immediate reception ; and with the universal approbation of all the ancient poets and critics, made Pope sit above Boileau. " [2] Here Voltaire has practically replaced Boileau on Parnassus' judgment-seat.

1. See Book IV, ch. IV.
2. *Op. cit.*, vol. III. This essay reveals the decline in taste for French

In the same year (1760) appeared Lyttelton's elegant Boileau-Pope Dialogue (No. XIV) in his *Dialogues of the Dead*, interesting for its numerous glances at French and English authors. Lyttelton is very urbane in his treatment of Boileau ; but the same negative " edging-off " attitude as we have seen in the above paragraphs is evident here too. The tendency of both the poet interlocutors to personal satire is deprecated and so softening an effect has " the Elysian climate " had upon Boileau that he confesses to Pope, " without the least ill-humour, that in your *Eloisa to Abelard*, your *Verses to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, and some others you wrote in your youth there is more fire of poetry than in any of mine. You excelled in the pathetic which I never approached. I will also allow that you hit the manner of Horace and the sly delicacy of his wit more exactly than I, or than any other man who has written since his time. [1] Nor could I, nor did even Lucretius himself, make philosophy so poetical, and embellish it with such charms as you have given to that of Plato, or (to speak more properly) of some of his modern disciples, in your celebrated *Essay on Man* " Later on, Boileau makes the startling admission (after Pope has been talking about Cowley) that he " cannot but think that, if a moderate portion of the superfluities of his (Cowley's) wit were given by Apollo to some of their (the English) modern bards, who write common-place morals in very smooth verse, without any absurdity, but without a single new thought, or one enlivening spark of imagination, it would be a great favour to them, and do them more service than all the rules laid down in my *Art of Poetry* and yours of *Criticism*. " The dialogue bears many evidences of Lyttelton's thorough knowledge of Boileau, and both in its general conception, and in Boileau's first words to Pope, " I am told that you made me your model in poetry ", adds to the proof as to the eighteenth century's opinion regarding Pope's indebtedness to Boileau. [2]

About this time, while Boileau is hard-pressed on one side, he is called upon to face a new attack from another direction. His

things in painting and music also ; the Italians are preferred to the French in the former and Handel is placed with the Italians in the latter. " All the French composers, not excepting Lulli and Rameau, were excluded, *nemine contradicente* ". The essay is signed Plotius.

1. All students of the two poets might not agree with Lyttelton in this judgment.

2. See Bk IV, chap. IX.

poet's bays are being withered; but no one has yet challenged his position as, at least, a great artist, a conscientious craftsman. Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* (1761) throws down the gauntlet to Boileau the "correct", and his criticism, according to his custom, is explicit, with quotation of chapter and verse. That almost universal favourite of the century, the *Lutrin*, has to bear the brunt of this criticism; the weak points in its armour are searched out with merciless clear-sightedness: "In the *Lutrin*", says Kames, "the Goddess of Discord is introduced without any connection; she is of no consequence in the poem, and acts no part except that of lavishing praise upon Lewis XIV." [1] And he returns to the charge: "The relation of a part to the whole, being extremely intimate, demands the utmost degree of congruity; witness the *Lutrin*, a burlesque poem, which is closed with a serious and warm panegyric on Lamoignon, one of the king's judges:

Amphora coepit
Institui, currente rota, cur urceus exit."

Most of Kames' criticism, however, deals with minutiae of style, and here he is sometimes very severe. It is strange to find an English critic blaming Boileau for not being a correct enough versifier; but here is his judgment on Boileau's caesuras: "This rule (that in rhyme the sense should not be divided in the couplet) is quite neglected in French versification. Even Boileau makes no difficulty to close one subject with the first line of the couplet and to begin a new subject with the second. Such licence, however sanctioned by practice, is unpleasant by the discordance between the pauses of the sense and the melody." [2] Speaking disapprovingly of similes that are merely witticisms, he says: "Virgil has not escaped this puerility... nor Boileau, the chastest of all writers, and that even in his *Art of Poetry*", quoting *A. P.*, I, 21 f., and *Satire XI.* [3] Among "a miserable jumble of expressions" (including examples from English and French) he cites Boileau, *A. P.*, II, 319, and a passage from *Ep.* V. [4] The popular *Ninth Epistle* of Boileau suffers thus at Kames' hands: "A poet, in a short and lively expression, may animate his muse, his genius and even his

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 300, note.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 339.

verse, but to animate his verse and to address a whole epistle to it, as Boileau doth, is insupportable." [1] This somewhat carping criticism reaches its climax in the following comment on Boileau's *Fourth Epistle*, l. 61 : " A ces mots essuyant sa barbe limoneuse " : " A god wiping his dirty beard is proper for burlesque poetry only, and altogether unsuitable for the strained elevation of this poem." [2]

Now note how much more insidious this kind of critical flank attack on Boileau's supremacy was than Warton's. Warton criticized from a Romantic point of view, which Boileau and his extreme admirers did not admit as valid. But Kames' critical " jabs " are all from Boileau's own classical point of view, — they are made on the grounds of perfection of plan, of good taste, of " correctness ". Boileau the poet is shown to be, after all, not an infallible follower of Boileau the critic. Kames set a-going under Boileau's reputation a kind of sapping operation which went on concurrently with the main attack above ground, and which we shall see Landor carrying to completion at the same moment that Keats is giving its logical termination to the work of Warton.

The critical remarks on Boileau that follow are of a miscellaneous kind, but all show the new carping attitude. A writer on " The Literary Merits of the Ancients and Moderns considered and compared " in *The Royal Magazine* for September, 1763, says : " The question whether ancient or modern authors have the justest claim to superiority, does not seem to have been hitherto discussed with impartiality, and consequently the decisions of those who have treated the subject are but little worthy of regard. The judgments of writers on both sides appear to have been biased by prepossession and they have set up their own particular taste as the standard and criterion of perfection. Thus Boileau, who was bigoted to the ancients, treats Tasso and Quinault with the utmost contempt, though the former has always deservedly held a distinguished place amongst epic, the latter amongst lyric poets." [3] As is well known, Gibbon studied French literature assiduously during his youthful sojourns in Switzerland (publishing in French an *Essai sur l'étude de la Littérature* in 1761) ; one of the fruits of this study was the following note in his diary for Sept. 3,

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 343, where there is also a critique of Boileau's " Un fou rempli d'erreurs ".
2. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. III. See further, Bk. IV, ch. IV, of the present work.

1763, written at Lausanne: "Here, however, I would make a distinction between this satirist" (i. e. Juvenal, whose "rooted hatred to his species" he has been referring to) "and Boileau. Neither of them were endowed with tenderness of sentiment. But this defect in Boileau proceeded from a coldness of heart and fancy which rendered him but little susceptible to any passion whatever."[1] The following selections from Robert Lloyd's (ob. 1764) poem *On Rhyme* show disrespect at the same time that they hit shrewdly on one of Boileau's most effective devices:

From Boileau down to his translators,
Dull paraphrasts and imitators,
All rail at metre at the time
They write and owe their sense to rhyme.
Had *he* so mauled his gentle foe,
But for that lucky word Quineaut (*sic*)?
Or had his stroke been half so fine
Without that closing word Cotin?
Yet dares he on this very theme
His own Apollo to blaspheme,
And talk of wars twixt rhyme and sense,
And murders which ensu'd from thence,
As if they both resolved to meet,
Like Theban sons, in mutual heat,
Forgetful of the ties of brother,
To maim and massacre each other.
.....
And Boileau leaves it as a rule
To all who enter Phoebus' school,
To make the metre strong and fine,
Poets, write first your second line.
'Tis folly all — no poet flows
In tuneful verse, who thinks in prose."[2]

Shenstone contributes this personal thrust: "The vanity and extreme self-love of the French is nowhere more observable than in their authors; and, among these, in none more than Boileau; who, besides his rhodomontades, preserves even the most insipid reading in his notes, though he removed it from the text for the sake of one ever so much better."[3] Vicesimus Knox, in his essay

1. *Miscellaneous Works of Gibbon*. London, 1814, vol. V, p. 294.
2. Chalmers' *English Poets*, vol. XV, p. 125.
3. Shenstone's *Essays*, XXIV.

entitled *Cursory Thoughts on Satire and Satirists* (1778) says : " Boileau seems to have blended with judgment the manner of Horace and Juvenal. Yet whatever degree of elegance he possesses, the natural monotony of French verse tires an ear accustomed to the various harmony of our English poets. The French language never appears so mean as in the heroic couplet. He who reads the *Henriade* and at the same time thinks of Milton, Dryden, Garth or Pope, must close the volume with all the loathing of disgust. He who reads Boileau will find his improving imitator Pope rise in his opinion. Pope rouses the attention by all the changes of musical modulation ; Boileau soothes it to dull repose by the lullaby of similar pauses uniformly repeated. " [1]

The most uncompromising critic of Boileau in the eighteenth century is probably Percival Stockdale. He also supports himself, however, on Voltaire's crutches. In his *Inquiry into the Nature and Genuine Laws of Poetry ; including a particular Defence of the Writings and Genius of Mr. Pope* (1778), which is really one of the answers called forth by Warton's *Essay on Pope*, Stockdale quotes the passage from Warton's " Dedication to Dr. Young " in which Voltaire's criticism of Boileau is cited, accuses Warton of unmanliness in refusing to speak out and translate the Voltaire passage into English in capital letters, and then says : " This analysis of Boileau particularizes and comprehends at least all his poetical merit. " He then goes on to explain why there is " no great poet in the French language " ; the reason lies in the very character of the French people, which he analyses. Then he returns to Boileau. " The genius and acquirements of Boileau are justly and accurately defined by Voltaire. To his definition I shall only add, that I defy Dr. Warton or any other critic, to produce me ten lines in Boileau that will be read with unaffected and vigorous poetical emotion. But Pope's knowledge was liberal and extensive ; his genius was penetrating and ardent ; and it was as rich, extensive and various as his knowledge..... He no sooner invokes his Muse than she is perfectly propitious to his invocation ; he informs and convinces ; he exasperates ; he soothes and melts us ; he elevates and transports us, as the subject requires. You say, he took Boileau for his model ; it is impossible that your assertion can be

1. *Essays Moral and Literary*. 12th ed. 1791, v. II, p. 227. Essay No. 139. It should be noted how the growing dislike of French metre accompanies and partly causes the decline of Boileau's reputation.

true. He was too good a judge of poetry himself; and he must have been too conscious of his powers to have had recourse to so cold and mechanical an example.[1] You may tell me with equal propriety, that Ben Jonson was the model of Dryden, or Sophocles of Shakespeare. Pope is an English Pegasus; adorned with splendid and beautiful trappings; holding a bold and animated career, and disdaining the ground. Boileau is the first horse of a waggon; distinguished by some frugal and common ornaments; a passive, laborious and useful animal; pulling on in a slow, sure and steady pace; and jingling his bells. If your estimate of Mr. Pope's merits had been directed and determined by taste and judgment, you would never have dragged him down to a level with Boileau; whose works, indeed, you might have justly ranked with those of Pitt, the translator of Vida's *Art of Poetry* and of the *Aeneid*; or with the *Essay on Satire* written by the late Dr. Brown, and prefixed by Warburton to the moral Essays of Mr. Pope; or with the artificial and luke-warm poetry of Addison's Campaign."[2]

Farther on in the same work he says: "More illustrious achievements than didactic poems are attributed to Mr. Pope by Voltaire. I shall quote the French verses to which I refer; they very justly describe the moral excellence of our great poet. Voltaire had mentioned Horace and Boileau. He adds:

> Vous y cherchiez le vrai; vous y goûtiez le beau
> .....
> Mais Pope approfondit ce qu'ils ont effleuré.
>
> (Voltaire. Au Roi de Prusse).

This is much higher praise than that which Voltaire gives to Boileau."[3] This new source of Voltairean influence in behalf of Pope and against Boileau is referred to again by Stockdale in his *Lectures on the truly eminent English Poets*. "A great part", he writes, "of the substance of my present eulogy on Pope, in which I have collaterally paid a sincere tribute to the memory of Dr. Garrick, was given to our poet, in French verse, by Voltaire; who classes him far beyond his countryman, Boileau. This just and honourable treatment of Pope is very remarkable, from a writer

1. This is the first direct challenge to the seeker after a Bolevian influence on Pope.
2. *Op. cit.*, pp. 49-69.
3. *Op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

who was extremely prejudiced in favour of the literature of his country, and who, as a Frenchman, could know very little of poetry. Dr. Warton ought to have known better; who sinks Pope to a level with Boileau[1]; not much to the credit of his discernment as a critic; nor of his generosity as an Englishman."[2] These passages are particularly interesting, first, because they show that there were bold spirits in the eighteenth century who could relegate Boileau to the literary dust-heap with as much nonchalance as any ignorant and flippant critic of our own day; secondly, because they confirm the impression we must have gained from several of the citations in this chapter that the long-enduring eighteenth century habit of linking Boileau and Pope so closely that you had to take both or leave both is obsolescent and that henceforth it will be possible to be, if one wishes, an enthusiastic "Papist" and at the same time a fanatical detractor of Boileau. In the next age, Byron will be a striking exemplar of this new attitude, for which it is increasingly evident that Voltaire was largely responsible, not only from the Boileau but from the Pope side.

The following remark of Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric* (1783) with its accompanying note shows that a new French ally has been gained by the anti-Boileau party. "Among French authors", he says, "Boileau has undoubtedly much merit in didactic poetry. Their later critics are unwilling to allow him any great share of original genius or poetic fire."*[3] But John Pinkerton, that

1. Owen Ruffhead, in his *Life of Pope* (1769), objects to Warton's identification of Pope with Boileau in his *Essay on Pope*. "But why should this critic," he says, "apply, or rather pervert, Voltaire's sentiments, to express his judgment of Mr. Pope?... If Voltaire's authority is of any weight, the critic need not be told, that whatever Voltaire might think of Boileau, he entertained a very different judgment of Mr. Pope from that which the critic has expressed by transferring Voltaire's character of the former to the latter." *Op. cit.* p. 445 ff.

2. *Op cit.*, vol. II, p. 420. Lecture viii: Pope. In another part of the same work, he says: "I cannot make any remarks on *French* poets, for I should thank *true taste*, if it would tell me *who they are*. The nation wants vigorous and noble sentiment; and their language is neither flowing nor energetic; how then should they have even an adequate *idea* of poetry?" *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 496.

*. (Blair's note). Vide *Poétique française de Marmontel.* [This *Poétique* was a redaction of Marmontel's critical articles in the *Encyclopédie*, which were still later published as the *Éléments de littérature*. Marmontel never misses a chance of throwing cold water on Boileau's fame.]

3. *Op. cit.*, v. III, p. 148.

interesting Scotch antiquary who just missed being an important critic, comes nearest to Stockdale's severity in dealing with Boileau. " I hope ", he writes in his *Letters of Literature* (1785) (of which, in some quarters, Horace Walpole was suspected of being the author), " by and by the time will come when the most distant imitation of the sentiments and manner of classic writers (for example, Boileau's of Horace and Juvenal) will become, as it deserves, as ridiculous and contemptible as Ronsard's adoption of their verbiage and idiom. "[1] An impious hand is here raised against the very ark of the neo-classic covenant, imitation of the ancients. " Boileau's noted ode ", he continues, " so replete with tinsel, and with nonsense, proves that he had not the smallest spark of poetical genius, and that he could not even have arisen above the meanest class of scribblers, had he not been the very ape of the ancients and had the address and agility of that animal sometimes to jump on the shoulders of his masters, and the impudent ignorance to look big when dressed in their clothes. "[2] *The Monthly Review* published in 1788 a review of D'Alembert's *Histoire des membres de l'Académie française*; about six pages of it are devoted to remarks on Boileau, of which I quote the following: " We have some excellent reflections on the genius and originality of Boileau, which have been disputed as well as those of Pope..... Personal satire soon loses its salt and piquancy; and the satires of Boileau, as well as the *Dunciad* of Pope, are less read now than any of their other works. "[3] Anna Seward, " the Swan of Lichfield ", wrote in April, 1789, to the Rev. Dr. Whalley: " National jealousy, and the prudery of French taste in poetry, too often made Boileau unjust to the excellencies of Milton's compositions for us to believe he meant to exalt that author, when he declared the constituent excellence of the sonnet to be grave and simple energy, which we find carried to its last perfection in a few of Milton's. "[4]

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 126 ff. Letter XX.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. 79, p. 647.
4. *Letters of Anna Seward*, v. II, p. 303. Letter LXXVI. What does Anna Seward mean by saying Boileau was unjust to Milton? Where does Boileau mention Milton?

CHAPTER V

DURING THE AGE OF JOHNSON

ORTHODOXY

We have now to follow the other branch of the great schism of 1746 — the orthodox branch — down to the end of the century. The overshadowing figure in this company, and perhaps the influence which held the company together, was of course the great man who gave his name to the age, Samuel Johnson himself.

The literary dictator of Georgian England remained faithful to his predecessor of the Age of Louis XIV. Of Dr. Johnson's knowledge of and esteem for Boileau there is evidence both external and internal. For we may dismiss the inexplicable statement of Thomas Tyers [1] that " he (Johnson) took no critic from the shelf, neither Aristotle, Bossu nor Boileau. He hardly liked to quote, much more to steal " (if he means anything else than simply to say that Johnson did not quote his authorities, though even that is far from being literally true). We shall prefer to believe the following interesting information about Johnson's French reading given us by Mrs. Thrale (or Mrs. Piozzi)[2] : " Dr. Johnson was a great reader of French literature, and delighted exceedingly in Boileau's works. Molière I think he had hardly sufficient taste of ; and he used to condemn me for preferring La Bruyère to the Duc de Rochefoucauld, who (he said) was the only *gentleman* writer who wrote like a professed author. " The following remark by Murphy in his *Essay on Johnson's Life and Genius* [3], is curious for the way it confirms part of Mrs Thrale's observation and refutes part : " Johnson, though thoroughly versed in that language (French) and a professed admirer of Boileau and La Bruyère, did not understand its pronunciation. " So much

1. In his Biographical Sketch of Dr. Samuel Johnson. See Hill's edition of the *Johnson Miscellanies*, v. II, p. 372.
2. See Piozzi's Anecdotes in Hill's *Johnson Miscellanies* (v. I, p. 334).
3. See Hill's *Johnson Miscellanies* (v. I, p. 416).

for the "external" testimony. The "internal" is much more abundant. In his *Life of Pope*, Johnson says: "The *Characters of Men and Women* are the product of diligent speculation upon human life; much labour has been bestowed on them and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his *Characters of Women* with Boileau's *Satire*; it will be seen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated and female excellence selected: and he is surely no mean writer to whom Boileau shall be found inferior." The famous letter to Chesterfield shows knowledge of Boileau in its quotation of his "Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre." (A. P., III, 272); in the *Life of Dryden*, we find the curious observation that "Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder"; in a eulogy of La Bruyère's *Caractères* [1], Johnson notes Boileau's criticism "that it is written without correction"; and other references of his to Boileau will be found in his *Life of Congreve*, in his *Life of Dryden*, in his *Life of Rochester*, in *Boswell* (Hill, III, 347), and in Nos. 92 and 168 of *The Rambler*. Johnson's remark on Savage in his *Life* of that person, that "he was indeed not so much a good man as the friend of goodness", seems to me strangely reminiscent of Boileau's description of himself as an "ami de la vertu plutôt que vertueux" (Ep. X, 92). [2]

As Johnson's influence overarches the whole age, I have quoted his views on Boileau without any attempt to keep a chronological sequence by referring to dates. In dealing with the smaller fry of criticism, it will be best to observe this sequence as before. Going back, then, to 1751, we find John Brown, M. A. ("Estimate Brown") saying, in his *Essays on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury*: "Thus the judicious poet... endeavours always to be rational. His application being made to man, should he let loose Imagination to its random flights, he must shock the Reason of every penetrating observer. Hence appears the necessity of cultivating that Maxim in poetical Composition, which the two best French critics, Boileau and Bouhours, have

1. *Life of Addison.*

2. It seems to me that Professor P. H. Houston, in the chapter "Johnson and Boileau" in his *Doctor Johnson: A Study in Eighteenth Century Humanism* (Harvard University Press, 1923), exaggerates the debt of Johnson to the French critic. But perhaps he merely intends to draw a parallel.

so much insisted on; 'that all poetical Beauty must be founded in Truth'." [k] Shenstone, whom we saw in the last chapter rebuking Boileau's vanity, has sometimes more favourable notices of him; Pope is declared to be "more witty and less simple than the modern M. Boileau, who claimed the merit of uniting the style of Juvenal and Persius with that of Horace;" [2] again, "Boileau has endeavoured to prove in one of his admirable satires that man has no manner of pretence to prefer his faculties before those of the brute creation." [3] An anonymous answer to Christopher Smart's "Letter to a Friend at Cambridge" by way of preface to his *Hilliad* (1753) says, defending Smart's attack on bad writers: "It is to prevent a contagion of this sort that Horace took the pen in hand;... The ingenious authors of France have always attended to this point. Truth, they insisted, is the very foundation of good writing... to enforce this and preserve a manly way of thinking *Boileau* lashed the scribblers of his time, and in our own country the *Spectators*, *Tatlers*, and *Guardians* have laboured to this end... and to this we owe the *Dunciad* of Mr. Pope." [4] John Armstrong, in his poem on "Taste" (1753) has the conventional linking of Pope, Horace and Boileau. [5] Arthur Murphy in *Gray's-Inn Journal* has many references to Boileau. In "An Allegory on the Birth of Raillery from Humour and Ill-Nature", in No. 25 (April 7, 1753), he says that on the demise of Horace, "Raillery wandered a vagrant up and down, till at length she took it into her head to visit Boileau in Paris." [6] In No. 44 (Aug. 10, 1753), he tells how, by retiring into his library, a man may without expense converse with the best company, "without the expense of a *remise*, you may visit Boileau, La Fontaine, Voltaire, and the politest of the French nation." [7] In No. 46 (Sept. 1, 1753) he describes a vision he had of a "Sacrifice to the Graces" in the course of which "He (Strada) was followed by Bohours (sic),

k. (Brown's Note) "Que si on demande ce que c'est que cet agrément et ce sel, à mon avis il consiste principalement à ne jamais présenter au lecteur que des pensées vraies et des expressions justes." Œuvres de Boileau, tom. I. Préf. p. 29. [For quotation from Bouhours see, p. 270].

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 17. Essay I. On Ridicule.
2. *Essays*, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Chalmers' *Engl. Poets*, vol. XVI, p. 44.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. XVI, p. 538.
6. *Op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 214.
7. *Op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 383.

Rollin, and several Jesuits, who were at length joined by Boileau and La Fontaine. The former had a degree of severity in his smiles; the latter was all quickness, vivacity and wit. In imitation of Tibullus they begged leave to present their friends, and, accordingly, Garth, Prior and Gay were introduced."[1] In No. 72 (March 2, 1754) appears a prose dialogue between the author and his soul. Murphy introduces it by saying that the ancients recommended self-knowledge; "we likewise find", he continues, "that *Boileau*, the famous French satirist, was aware of the necessity of this spiritual retreat (if I may be allowed so to call it). He has accordingly entered into a review of himself in his Ninth Satire, which is certainly as pleasant a piece of humour as ever was produced by any writer, ancient or modern". He later quotes the first six lines of Boileau's poem, and continues: "In conformity to the injunction of the noble writer, and in imitation of the sensible and polite satirist, I have lately divided myself into two persons, in order to examine my inward frame..."[2] The prose dialogue that follows was, therefore, suggested by Boileau's *Ninth Satire*. In No. 93 (July 27, 1754), Murphy writes: "Another common method of *burlesque* is by making frequent application of grand and sublime passages in our best poets to things unworthy and mean. *Boileau* is, in my opinion, the happiest of all modern poets in this particular."[3] In No. 99 (Sept. 7, 1754), he shows himself a true neo-classic by praising one of Boileau's tenets which his modern defenders are most anxious to forget: "You know the poets are fond of personifying both physical and moral qualities, in order to give animation to their poetry, and to throw things as much as possible into action. *Boileau* has described in beautiful lines the secret of this poetical artifice and the fine effects of it", and he quotes the lines beginning

Là pour nous enchanter tout est mis en usage,

and ending

Et trouve sous sa main des fleurs toujours écloses.[4]

After this exhibition of homage, we shall not be surprised to meet Arthur Murphy again in Book II.

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 396.
2. *Op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 178 ff.
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 368.
4. *Op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 409.

In *The World* of Nov. 14, 1754 (No. 98), we read that "the severe Monsieur Boileau justly condemns the French operas, the morals of which he calls

morale lubrique
Que Lully réchauffa des sons de sa musique;"[1]

and we find David Hume in a letter to the Earl of Balcarres on Dec. 17, 1754, referring to Boileau's remark that "the misfortune of a book is not the being ill spoke of, but the not being spoke of at all," in connection with his own *History* which had just appeared.[2]

Thomas Warton was no more ignorant of Boileau than his brother, though his references to him are very much less important. In his *Observations on Spenser* (1754), he refers[3] to the *Dissertation sur la Joconde* which seems to suggest wide reading of his author. The distrust in Boileau as a literary historian goes further in the following remark in his *History of Poetry* than in the similar one quoted by his brother (see below, p. 61): "On this account (Warton has been speaking of the art shown in the *Roman de la Rose*) we are surprised that Boileau should mention Villon as the first poet of France who drew form and order from the chaos of the old French romances:

Villon sut le premier dans les siècles grossiers
Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers.

But the poetry of William of Lorris was not the poetry of Boileau. That this poem should not please Boileau, I can easily conceive. It is more surprising that it should have been censured by Petrarch, who lived in the age of fancy."[4] And, when he is treating the mediaeval drama, he has this interesting comment on a well-known passage in the *Art poétique*: "Boileau seems to think that the ancient pilgrimages introduced these sacred exhibitions into France:

Chez nos dévots aïeux le théâtre abhorré
.....
On vit renaître Hector, Andromaque, Ilion.

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 283.
2. *Letters of David Hume* (Birkbeck Hill ed.), p. xxvii, note 1.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. I, p. 310, note.
4. *Op. cit.*, Section 13.

The authority to which Boileau alludes in these nervous and elegant verses is Menestrier, an intelligent French antiquary. "[1]

The year 1756 brings us back again to Thomas's brother. For there is no better example of the curious "facing both ways" attitude of late eighteenth-century criticism than Joseph Warton. We saw him in the last chapter leading the heterodox to the assault on Boileau the poet; we shall now see him piling tribute after tribute on Boileau the writer. In fact, his business was rather to suggest that there was a higher *kind* of poetry than Boileau's than to deny that his was excellent of its kind. And, far from denying this, he comes to the rescue of Boileau on many occasions, as where he defends him against the common charge of plagiarizing on the ground that he improves what he borrows.[2] No book that we have to consider is so full of references to and quotations from Boileau as Warton's *Essay* is — a good evidence that he held him in some esteem. He points out many parallel passages in Boileau and Pope — an enterprise requiring, as any one who has attempted it can vouch, a most minute knowledge of both poets. Sometimes he is even enthusiastic over Nicholas, as in the following remarkable tribute to his *Art Poétique*: "May I be pardoned for declaring it as my opinion that Boileau's is the best Art of Poetry extant? The brevity of his precepts, enlivened by proper imagery, the justness of his metaphors, the harmony of his numbers, as far as Alexandrine lines will admit, the exactness of his method, the perspicacity of his remarks, and the energy of his style, all duly considered, may render this opinion not unreasonable. It is scarcely to be conceived how much is comprehended in four short cantos. He that has well digested these cannot be said to be ignorant of any important rule of poetry. The tale of the physician turning architect, in the fourth canto, is told with true pleasantry. It is to this work Boileau owes his immortality; which was of the highest utility to his nation, in diffusing a just way of thinking and banishing every species of false wit, and introducing a general taste for the manly simplicity of the ancients, on whose writings this poet had formed his taste."[3] This is perhaps the best summing-up of Boileau's merits that exists in English.

That Boileau's literary history was beginning to be suspect and

1. *Op. cit.*, Section 34.
2. *Essay on Pope*, v. I, p. 95. Compare Dryden, p. 6.
3. *Essay on Pope*, v. I, pp. 189-190.

that it was at the same time, still the main source for average knowledge about French literature is evident from the following interesting passage : " According to Boileau, whose testimony as a poet, but not, I fear, as an antiquarian, should be regarded, Villon was the first who gave any form or order to the French poetry :

Villon sut le premier, etc.

But Villon was merely a pert and insipid ballad-monger, whose thoughts and diction were as low and illiberal as his life. "[1] In another place, in an interesting discussion on La Fontaine, Boileau's opinion is at least respectfully quoted : " Boileau did not look upon La Fontaine as an original writer and used to say he had borrowed both his style and matter from Marot and Rabelais. "[2]

The progress made by Romanticism brought about in the last quarter of the eighteenth century a panicky return to strict orthodoxy among the neo-classics who had been inclining towards a dangerous latitudinarianism. I think it is quite possible to see signs of this in the second volume of Warton's *Essay*, which was not published before 1782, and in which Boileau is, I think, treated with more consistent respect than in the first volume (though still with considerable freedom).[3] After quoting some verses of the French poet, he says : " This is exquisitely pleasant and expressed with that purity and force, both of thought and diction, that happy Horatian mixture of jest and earnest, that contribute to place Despréaux *at the head of modern classics*.[4] I think it must be confessed he has caught the manner of Horace more successfully than Pope. It is observable that Boileau, when he first began to write, copied Juvenal ; whose violent, downright, declamatory species of satire is far more easy to be imitated than the oblique, indirect, delicate touches of Horace. "[5] The writer's further concern with Boileau is shown by a quotation from a French critic dealing with Boileau's subject-matter[6], by the following remark apropos of a line of Pope : " I recollect no passage in Horace, Juvenal or Boileau,

1. *Essay on Pope*, v. I, p. 338.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 67 (note).
3. A departure from strict chronological order may be excused here, in behalf of Warton, on the same grounds that applied to Johnson.
4. The italics are mine.
5. *Essay on Pope*, v. II, p. 279.
6. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 317.

more strongly pointed or more well-turned, than where our poet insists that the dignity of vice must not be lost "[1], by a reference to Boileau's letters in the style of Voiture and Balzac to the Duc de Vivonne [2], and by a remark near the end of the volume apropos of Pope's translation of Boileau's version of the fable of the oyster and the judge which caps very neatly his numerous references to the Frenchman in the two bulky volumes of his *Essay* : " Next follows a close translation of a fable from Boileau. It will be no unuseful or perhaps unpleasing amusement to compare these two pieces. And I will not think of making any apology for so frequently quoting a writer so pure, sensible and classical as Boileau. "[3]

Joseph Warton's interest in Boileau is not confined in its manifestations to his *Essay on Pope*. There are several references to the subject in the pages of *The Adventurer*. These are particularly numerous in No. 59, including quotations from Boileau's *Satires* on the poverty of poets, the remark, " Pindar was better rewarded for many of his odes than any other bard ancient or modern except perhaps Boileau for his celebrated piece of flattery on the taking of Namur ", and a reference to Boileau's house at Auteuil and the practicalness of his character. In No. 105, Warton says : " Boileau in his celebrated Eighth Satire, has not represented the misery and folly of man so forcibly or humorously as Menander" (whom he proceeds to quote). In No. 122 he says, criticizing the cruelty of Goneril and Regan in King Lear : " It is not sufficient to say that this monstrous absurdity is founded on historical truth if we recollect the just observation of Boileau, ' Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable ' " (with Soame's translation of the line). In No. 133 (which is an elaborate comparison of the Ancients and Moderns), he says : " If we proceed to consider the satirists of antiquity, I shall not scruple to prefer Boileau and Pope to Horace and Juvenal; the arrows of whose ridicule are more sharp, in proportion as they are more polished... Boileau and Pope have given to their satire the Caestus of Venus; their ridicule is concealed and oblique ; that of the Romans direct and open. The tenth satire of Boileau on women is more bitter, and more decent and elegant, than the sixth of Juvenal on the same subject... Above all, the *Lutrin*, the *Rape of the Lock*, the *Dispensary* and the *Dunciad* cannot be paral-

1. *Essay on Pope*, v. II, p. 478.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 466.
3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 468.

leled by any works that the wittiest of the ancients can boast of; because, by assuming the form of the epopea, they have acquired a dignity and gracefulness, which all satires delivered merely in the poet's own person must want, and with which the satirists of antiquity were wholly unacquainted; for the Batrachomuomachia of Homer cannot be considered as the model of these admirable pieces."

The Monthly Review of June and July, 1756, has a review of Warton's *Essay on Pope* (anonymous at that moment); in the July issue the reviewer answers Warton's contention that "in no polished nation, after Criticism has been much studied and the rules of writing established, has any very extraordinary work appeared. This has visibly been the case in Greece, in Rome and in France, after Aristotle, Horace and Boileau had written their Arts of Poetry", by saying, "We recollect no poem of a very extraordinary nature produced in France before Boileau published his Art of Poetry. If any exception be brought in favour of some of Corneille's pieces, we ask, was he ignorant of Aristotle?" [1] Goldsmith knew his Boileau; in his *Essay on the Theatre; or a Comparison between Sentimental and Laughing Comedy* he says: "Boileau, one of the best modern critics, asserts that comedy will not admit of tragic distress:

> Le comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs,
> N'admet point dans ses vers de tragiques douleurs!"

In *The Bee* for Nov. 17, 1759, he says: "What we clearly perceive, says Boileau, we can clearly express." [2]

The British Magazine of August, 1760, published one of the most elaborate exercises of the eighteenth century in comparative criticism, entitled "Considerations on the Similitude of Genius between Horace, Boileau and Pope". The general critical interest of this essay is so great that I have reproduced the whole of it in Appendix D. The progress of criticism is well-shown in the substitution of the following discriminatory analysis for the simple grouping of the three poets without comment: "Each of these great masters has a manner peculiar to himself: the morality of Horace is sententious; and, from the many admirable maxims scattered up and down in his writings, a system of ethics might be easily collected. The moral precepts of Boileau seem to be deliv-

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. XV, p. 52.
2. Murray's *British Classics*, vol. III, p. 104.

ered by an easy and agreeable companion; but the morality of Pope is serious, sublime and calculated to make an impression upon the hearts of all readers." [1] Again in this essay Voltaire is appealed to. "Mons. de Voltaire does not scruple to prefer Pope, as a moral and didactic poet, both to Horace and his countryman. In his poem upon Natural Religion, addressed to the King of Prussia, he delivers his sentiments to this effect: 'A few shining strokes of morality are scattered up and down in the lively writings of Horace and Boileau; but Pope has dived to the bottom, whilst they only skim over the surface. With bolder steps and a mind more resolute, he with his torch enlightened the profound abyss of existence, and from him man first learned to know himself.'" [2] On the other hand, "if we consider these three eminent authors as satirists, it will not be so easy to decide to which the preference is due. The *Lutrin* of Boileau is equal to the *Rape of the Lock* or the *Dunciad* of Pope, and might, upon one account, be considered as superior to them; namely, as it was the first poem of the kind which can be looked upon as a masterpiece, and as it suggested the idea of the other two. In his other satires, Boileau is not inferior in elegance or severity to Pope, who has often copied particular passages from him. Thus Boileau makes his impertinent adviser tell him,

> Horace avant vous avait dit en latin,
> On est assis à son aise aux sermons de Cotin,

a pleasantry which Mr. Pope has adopted in this humorous distich:

> Horace long before you
> Said Tories called him Whig, and Whigs a Tory." [3]

The writer seems to think Pope and Horace are slightly happier "in drawing characters". But "there are some striking instances of this beauty in Boileau: the description of the avaricious president and his wife is a picture of the grotesque kind, which strikes the imagination in as lively a manner as any of the comic pieces of Hogarth." [4] As Boileau's masterpiece he would select his "vindication of himself; which he used to call his favourite." [5] He

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 467-468.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

points out the singular combination of the satirist and the panegyrist in all three poets; and thinks that "Augustus and Louis XIV very probably owe their reputations in a great measure to Horace and Boileau." [1] The *Art poétique* especially aroused this writer's admiration. "The authors whom we have now under consideration were excellent critics as well as poets and moralists. The Art of Poetry of Horace and the Essay on Criticism of Pope, abound in good sense and fine poetry; but Boileau whose genius was rather chaste and refined than sublime and elevated, seems to have surpassed them both in this respect. His Art of Poetry is much more full and complete than that of Horace, and contains all the most important precepts of criticism. There is no passage in any author that abounds with a greater variety of beauties than that wherein he describes the several different species of poetry, and in characterizing each, assumes its peculiar style and catches its spirit. The resemblance between these three illustrious writers confirms the truth of that ingenious observation of Plutarch, that Nature delights in reproducing the same characters, and that a conformity may be traced in her productions, though separated by an interval of ages." [2]

A poet in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1761, is moved by the following theme, "On Boileau's writing in praise of the ancients", to exclaim:

> How can we, Boileau, in thy sentence join,
> That none but ancients felt the warmth divine,
> At the same time that thy example shows,
> A modern bard as nobly can compose? [3]

The writer of an "Essay upon Modern Latin Authors" in *The British Magazine* for August, 1762, retails in good faith the old story about Boileau and the *Musae Anglicanae* which Tickell had disposed of long before. [4] Lord Chesterfield, writing to his god-son in 1763, informs him Boileau was one of the men who have "immortalisé par leurs œuvres Louis XIV et son siècle;" [5] in 1765, writing to the same correspondent, he speaks of Alexander

1. *Op. cit.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. XXXI, p. 230.
4. *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 470, see above p. 29.
5. *Letters of Chesterfield to his God-son*, Carnarvon ed., p. 54. Letter No. xlm.

the Great "who is universally called a hero, but whom Boileau much more justly calls the Macedonian madman."[1] A writer in *The Annual Register* for 1764 says, anent "Simplicity in Writing": "It is this hath given to Boileau the most lasting wreath in France and to Shakespeare and Milton in England."[2] In a "Parallel between Tacitus and Livy" in *The British Magazine* for December, 1767, Plutarch is praised for diving "into the most profound recesses of the human heart"... and "contributing to their improvement in the knowledge of human nature; which is best known from circumstances which are to all appearance but of little importance. This judicious observation of Plutarch's has been adopted by the celebrated M. Boileau, who, in speaking of human nature, takes notice that

> .....une parole la découvre, un geste la fait paraître,
> Mais tout mortel n'a pas des yeux pour la connaître."[3]

The reviewer of the Abbé Batteux's *Quatre Poétiques* in *The Monthly Review* during 1771, quotes Warton's eulogy of Boileau's *Art Poétique* after the following introduction: "It will not be displeasing to such of our readers as are unacquainted with Boileau's work to see the ingenious Mr. Warton's opinion concerning it."[4] In *The Annual Register* for 1772 a remark of Boileau concerning Santeul, the Latin poet, is quoted.[5]

Elizabeth Montague shows in her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* that Boileau is still something of an authority to her. "The heroes of antiquity were not more disguised in the romances of Calprenède and Scudéri, than in the tragedies of Corneille, in spite of the admonitions given by that admirable critic Boileau to their dramatic writers in the following lines:

> Gardez donc de donner ainsi que dans Clélie
> L'air ni l'esprit français à l'antique Italie;
> Et sous des noms Romains faisant notre portrait
> Peindre Caton galant et Brutus dameret."[6]

Again, Boileau is quoted with approval on the desirability of simple exposition in the first acts of plays:

1. *Letters of Chesterfield to his God-son*, p. 158, Letter No. CXXII.
2. *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 186, 2nd pt.
3. *Op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 628.
4. *Op. cit.*, vol. XLIV, p. 556.
5. *Op. cit.*, vol. XV, p. 21, 2nd pt.
6. *Op. cit.*, 3rd ed. 1772, Introduction, p. 4.

Que dès les premiers vers l'action préparée
.....
Sans rien dire à l'esprit étourdir les oreilles;"[1]

and the authoress points out that the first scene of *Cinna* has been ridiculed by Boileau.[2]

Indignation at Voltaire's supposed desertion of Boileau inspires some fervent English *fidèles*. Horace Walpole, in a letter to the Countess of Ossory on October 26, 1769, bewails this defection as follows: "His (i. e. Voltaire's) low jealousy against Boileau whose ghost he is always ripping and pinching when he can with his own almost ghostly fingers, is unworthy of a man who does not want such little arts to secure fame."[3] In a later letter to Mr. Pinkerton (dated June 26, 1785), he dwells on the subject of Boileau at greater length: "Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile; but if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more. He certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his *Lutrin*, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients... In my eyes the *Lutrin*, the *Dispensary* and the *Rape of the Lock* are standards of grace and elegance, not to be paralleled by antiquity."[4]

Article XII in the Appendix of *The Monthly Review* for 1774, consists of a summary in three pages of the *Quatrième Lettre à M. de Voltaire, par M. Clément*, published in Paris in 1773, which is a defence of Boileau against Voltaire's strictures. "In regard to Boileau", says the reviewer, "there is none of the French poets who did honour to the age of Lewis XIV of whom Voltaire speaks

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
3. *Letters of Horace Walpole* (ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee, 1904), v. VII, p. 337.
4. Note once more the linking of *Le Lutrin* with the classical English example of the mock-epic.

so differently in the different parts of his writings. Sometimes he commends him highly, but much more frequently censures and criticizes him; in consequence of which it is a common practice among Voltaire's disciples to insult the memory of Boileau." [1]

Mickle, in the "Observations upon Epic Poetry" which introduces his translation of Camoëns' *Lusiad* (1771-75), while differing to some extent with Boileau's views on the Christian epic [2], shows great anxiety to reconcile his favourite poet's use of classical "machinery" with the prescriptions of "that celebrated French critic". He quotes the passage beginning:

Dans le vaste récit d'une longue action

in which Boileau sets forth his conception of the allegorical application of classical mythology; and proceeds to show that this is the only use Camoëns has made of the latter. [3]

In his Seventh Discourse (1776), Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose attitude towards the arts in general resembles that of Boileau's towards poetry, says: "Among the moderns, Boileau, Corneille, Pope and Dryden, are at least instances of genius not being destroyed by attention or subjection to rules and science." [4]

Vicesimus Knox is very representative of those who, though disposed by tradition to offer up incense to Boileau, were growing slightly restless under the influence of the attacks on his reputation. In his essay on *Classical Learning Vindicated* (1778), he speaks rather sarcastically of the "moderns" of his time according to whom "Ariosto, Tasso and Boileau are to be read in preference to Homer, Virgil and Horace..." [5] At the same time, he admits that the modern period deserves regard, "Nor will any man of letters, with just pretensions to taste, rest satisfied, without reading the works of Fénelon, of Boileau, and of many others who have written in the true spirit of the ancients." [6] In his *Cursory Thoughts on Satire and Satirists* (1778), on the other hand, the lukewarmness of the age towards Boileau appears. [7] Yet,

1. *Op. cit.*, vol. L, p. 575.
2. See below, Book IV, ch. II.
3. See Chalmers' *English Poets*, vol. XXI, p. 613 ff.
4. *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Oxford Univ. Press. *World's Classics*, p. 118.
5. *Essays Moral and Literary*, 12th ed., 1791, vol. I, p. 12.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 14.
7. See above, ch. IV, p. 51.

among his recommendations for a lady's library, he says: "If French books are required, those of Boileau, Fontenelle, La Pluche, and some select pieces of Voltaire and Rousseau, may with propriety, be admitted." [1]

There was no such wavering about Martin Sherlock.[2] Perhaps the most picturesque figure in our story is this Irishman who piqued Horace Walpole by "writing bad French and Italian when he could write good English", and who, at a time when Boileau was falling from grace even with his own countrymen, went on a crusade in his behalf in another foreign country. An Irishman pleading the cause of Boileau in Rome during the dawn of the Romantic movement — what professional dealer in paradoxes could have invented anything more startling? Yet Sherlock was in deadly earnest. Assisted by an Italian friend he actually drew up a *Consiglio ad un giovane poeta*, which he published at Naples in 1779, and which preached the neo-classic faith with much stress on Boileau. [Incidentally it was a feature of Sherlock's method to substitute for the old trio, Horace, Pope, Boileau, the new one Horace, Longinus, Boileau]. This book seems to have aroused some interest, for it was reviewed in the *Efemeridi letterarie di Roma* (1779, Nos. viii, ix and x) [3], and in the *Mercure* for February and March, 1780. In February, the reviewer speaks of M. Sherlock, "qui regarde Boileau comme le guide le plus sûr pour les jeunes poètes"; and in March he says, "Ne parlez point de Shakespeare à M. de Sherlock, et vous le prendrez pour un élève d'Horace et de Boileau." [4]

1. *Essays Moral and Literary*, 12th ed., 1791, vol. II, p. 370.

2. For a sketch of Sherlock's life, see the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

3. One might deduce from the following quotation from this review that Sherlock (and, therefore, Boileau) had some responsibility for discouraging a taste for Dante in 18th century Italy. "Ma spiriti avvezzi ad esser colpiti dalla maestra profondità, e dalla robustezza di Pope, di Dryden, di Younck (sic), di Boileau ed a sentir parlare la ragione sulle labbra di Calliope, e di Euterpe, come su quelle di Platone e di Socrate, possono essi piegarsi egualmente ad offerir degl'incensi all' Ippogrifo di Astolfo, e ad invocare con divota fiducia *Pape Satan, Pape Satan Aleppo*?" [Quoted in Sherlock's *Letters, etc.*, p. 187.]

4. Quoted in *Letters, etc.*, p. 181. See also (especially for his influence on the study of Dante) the following sonnet addressed to the "eruditissimo Signor Sherlock" by the Abbate Scarpelli (quoted on p. 131 of the *Letters, etc.*):

Chi pon silenzio in Pindo al turbin roco
Di vuoti di ragion carmi sonanti?

There is a great deal about Boileau in Sherlock's *Letters from an English traveller* (1780), (which is a translation by Duncombe of the author's original French *Lettres d'un voyageur anglais*, Geneva, 1779). Boileau's "Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable" serves as motto on the title-page. In speaking of Metastasio, the author assures us that that writer "felt the value of Boileau as well as of Horace; and he has never swerved from those great principles:

> Tout doit tendre au bons sens;
> Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable."[1]

He informs us that he told the Italian litterati, in his *Consiglio ad un giovane poeta*, that "Horace, Longinus and Boileau were the best critics that ever existed and that nothing which was not conformable to their principles was good."[2] In Rome and Naples he "found only sixteen persons who admitted nature and truth to be the foundation of poetry and who acknowledged Horace, Longinus and Boileau to be judges."[3] Boileau is connected with Sherlock's anti-Dante tendency in the following in a letter from Rome: "I allowed that Horace, Longinus and Boileau would have been charmed with the beauties of Dante and Ariosto, taken from nature and founded on truth; but that they would have condemned the whole of those two poems as being contrary to reason, good sense, and consequently to good taste, and, as models, dangerous to an extreme for young poets."[4] In another letter from Rome he says: "I would not admit the Italians as judges of Dante, nor the English as judges of Shakespeare; I summon them both to the tribunal of

> Chi sul are del gusto avviva il fuoco
> Dal cener freddo che premealo innanti?
> Sei tu, saggio Sherlock, che prese a gioco
> Le magre opre e i favolosi incanti,
> Fai che a *Natura* e a *Verità* dian loco
> L'alte follie de' Palladini erranti:
> Tu dissipi i Danteschi orror segreti,
> Che in Ausonia finor culto divino
> Ebbero dai troppo creduli Poeti,
> Onde il guardo volgendo al suol Latino,
> Flacco e Boileau, fatti per te più lieti;
> Ecco, gridano, Italia, il tuo Longino."

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-9.

Longinus, Horace and Boileau ; and I would have each of them hold the rank which shall be granted him by the united decision of those critics. "[1] Elsewhere he tells us that the English youth only studies Greek, Latin and French authors, not English ones; " at the age of twenty-one..... with his taste formed on the principles of Horace, Longinus and Boileau, he begins to read Shakespeare ; " and is therefore in a position to give an unbiased judgment on him. [2]

Almost equal loyalty is shown to Boileau by William Hayley, that omnivorous reader and tireless explorer of the by-paths of French literature. His *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1782) and its accompanying notes fairly bristle with references to Boileau. In the following *tirade*, however, we see a clear consciousness of the havoc that an English Boileau might have wrought in English poetry :

Among the names that judgment loves to praise,
The pride of ancient, or of modern days ;
What Laws of Poesy can Learning show
Above the critic song of sage Despréaux ?
His fancy elegant, his judgment nice,
His method easy and his style concise ;
The Bard of Reason, with her vigorous fraught,
Her purest doctrine he divinely taught ;
Nor taught in vain ! His precept clear and chaste
Reformed the errors of corrupted Taste ;
And French Imagination, who was bit
By that Tarantula, distorted Wit,
Ceasing her antic gambols to rehearse,
Blest the pure magic of his healing verse :
With his loud fame applauding Europe rung,
And his just praise a rival Poet sung.
Yet, had this Friend of Verse-devoted Youth,
This tuneful Teacher of Poetic truth,
Had he but chanc'd his doctrine to diffuse,
Ere Milton communed with his sacred Muse ;
And could that English, self-dependent soul,
Born with such energy as mocks control,
Could his high spirit, with submissive awe,
Have stooped to listen to a Gallic Law ;
His hallowed subject by that Law forbid,
Might still have lain in silent darkness hid,

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 135.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

> And, this bright Sun not rising in our sphere,
> Homer had wanted still his true compeer. [1]

Here it is Boileau the critic who is praised, elsewhere Boileau the satirist gets his meed :

> So haughty Gallia in thy Epic school,
> No great examples rise, but many a rule.
> Yet though unjust to Tasso's nobler lays [2],
> Keen Boileau shall not want his proper praise;
> He, archly waving his satiric rod,
> Thro' the new path which first Tassoni trod,
> Pursued his sportive march in happy hour,
> And plucked from Satire's thorn a festive flower.
> His sacerdotal war shall wake delight,
> And smiles in gravity herself excite,
> While canons live to quarrel or to feast,
> And gall can tinge the spirit of a priest. [3]

Warton's statement that critical activity coincides with a decline in creative ability had already been challenged, as we have seen. Hayley contributes the following rebuttal : " But with regard to France, may we not assert that her poetical productions which arose after the publication of Boileau's Didactic Essay, are at least equal if not superior to those which preceded that period ? " [4]

Hayley's interest in French literature extended even to that *terra incognita* for most readers, the French epic of the seventeenth century. Apropos of Chapelain, he says : " As he had the ill fate to be persecuted by the pitiless rigour of Boileau, his inharmonious poem can never sink into a desirable oblivion. The treatise of Mambrun seems to have excited among the French an eagerness to distinguish themselves in the field of epic poetry ; for several epic poems were published in France in a few years after that work appeared ; but most of them, and particularly those on scriptural subjects, were hardly even known to exist :

> Le Jonas inconnu sèche dans la poussière,
> Le David imprimé n'a point vu la lumière,
> Le Moïse commence à moisir par les bords.
> Boileau, Sat. IX. " [5]

1. *Essay on Epic Poetry*, Epistle I, l. 335 ff. See also Bk. IV, p. 323.
2. See below, Bk. IV, p. 349.
3. *Essay on Epic Poetry*, Epistle III, l. 301 ff.
4. *Essay on Epic Poetry*, p. 171.
5. *Works of Hayley*, v. IV, p. 193.

He also quotes a specimen of the verse of Le Moine, author of *Saint Louis*, and says he had had thoughts of translating it : " But I find the character which Boileau gave of its author so completely just that I despair of producing any adequate copy of the beauties and defects which are exhibited in the following lines. "[1]

James Beattie refers frequently to Boileau in his *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783). " Pope imitates Boileau and Dryden... but he has more fire and fancy than the French author, " he says in his section on the Imagination, ch. III.[2] In his Theory of Languages (Part II, ch. iv), he says : " Grammarians seem to me to speak rashly when they call every tongue barbarous except the Greek and Roman. The language of such men as Milton, Addison, Boileau, Tasso and Metastasio, cannot be barbarous. "[3] Notice that Boileau is the sole representative of his language. In the Illustrations on Sublimity occurs this passage : " The most elegant authors are in every language the most perspicuous ; as Addison and Swift in English ; Caesar and Cicero, in Latin ; Metastasio, Tasso and Ariosto, in Italian ; and Vertot, Boileau and the Archbishop of Cambrai, in French. "[4] In discussing French " poetical dialect ", he says : " It may, I think, be presumed that in future ages they will have more of this dialect than they have at present. This I would infer from the very uncommon merit of some of their late poets, particularly Boileau and La Fontaine, who, in their respective departments, will continue to be imitated, when the present modes of French prose are greatly changed... "[5]

About the same time, Blair was saying : " But his *Art of Poetry*, his *Satires* and *Epistles*, must ever be esteemed eminent, not only for solid and judicious thought, but for correct and elegant poetical expression and fortunate imitation of the ancients. "[6]

The Monthly Review for September, 1788, has the following article : " Boileau's Satire of Man, Imitated, 8vo, 6d., Bladon, 1787. This *Satire of Man* as it is styled, presents us with some of the *sentiments* of Boileau, but with very little of his *spirit*. Pope, indeed, who was his great admirer, has drawn off much of it into

1. *Works of Hayley*, v. IV, p. 195. For further references to Boileau, see *Works*, v. IV, pp. 205, 229.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. I, p. 230.
3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 398.
4. *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 236.
5. *Essays on Poetry and Music*, p. 216.
6. *Lectures*, v. III, p. 148.

our language. The extract made by the poetical chemist of 1787 is consequently poor and weak. Next to the *Art of Poetry* and the *Lutrin* the satires of this elegant and witty Frenchman are considered as the most finished and ingenious of his works. His humour is certainly exquisite. 'Tis *aerugo mera*, as the Roman poet expresses it."

That Boileau's views even on lyric poetry were not without influence at this late date is shown from the following extract from a letter written by Anna Seward to the Rev. T. S. Whalley on April 10, 1789. The Swan of Lichfield is discussing the sonnet and its need of strength and majesty rather than lightness and elegance. She adds: "This was Boileau's idea concerning the nature of this order of verse. Behold a translation from a passage in him that proves it. I mean that it should stand the first in my collection as showing the principles on which mine have been written. Upon your present system the numbers will not please you. It is, however, Boileau's sense and image." A note refers to "the first sonnet in the Miscellany."[1]

In his Dissertation "On Poetry considered as an Imitative Art" (1789), the great Hellenist, Thomas Twining (who was well-read in French literature), quotes Boileau's line:

S'en va frapper le mur et revient en roulant,

and claims that its "imitative harmony" would not be evident unless pointed out.[2] What a light this throws upon the minute attention that was still paid to Boileau as a metrist! Twining was also familiar with Boileau's prose, as is shown by the following remark where he is rebutting La Motte's attempt to explain away Homer's use of "vulgar words". "The only reasonable way of defending Homer is, surely, to content ourselves with saying, in general, that the expression could not have the same incongruous appearance in Homer's time; as, in that case, he certainly would not have used it. At least, this would be a better apology than to assert, with Boileau, that συβωτης is one of the finest words in the Greek language." A note refers to the "Réflexion 9 sur Longin."[3]

1. *Letters of Anna Seward* (Edinburgh, 1811), v. II, pp. 257-258. For the translation referred to above, see p. 222.

2. *Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry, translated with Notes on the Translation and on the Original and two Dissertations on Poetical and Musical Imitation* (2nd. ed., 1812), v. I, p. 11.

3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 302.

In a letter to his brother dated Nov. 29, 1791, Twining says: "Then I am 'hérissé de grec', you know, as Boileau says of a pedant."[1]

Sir James Mackintosh, giving an unfavourable account of the reign of Louis XIV (1791), says: "Talent seemed, in that reign, robbed of the conscious elevation, of the erect and manly port which is its noblest associate and its surest indication. The mild purity of Fénelon — the lofty spirit of Bossuet — the masculine mind of Boileau — the sublime fervour of Corneille — were confounded by the contagion of ignominious and indiscriminate servility."[2]

That forgotten satirist and scholar, Thomas James Mathias, one of the best Italian specialists of his time and, like Hayley, an explorer of the by-paths of French literature, is also, like Hayley, a voluble enthusiast about Boileau. His *Pursuits of Literature* (1794) is, if we may adopt one of Boileau's own phrases, "hérissé de" Boileau. In a sketch of the history of satire which he gives in the Introductory Letter, we get an elaborate tribute to Boileau which is calculated to make us forget that we are in the dawn of Romanticism and to transport us back to the Age of Dryden. Just four years before the appearance of *The Lyrical Ballads*, an Englishman could write as follows: "An interval of ages passed, dark and barbarous. The power of satire, in its full and legitimate strength, was never again felt till the reign of Louis XIV of France. Then appeared a poet second to none of his predecessors. A philosopher without being wordy, the friend of sense and virtue, a gentleman in principle, independent in spirit and fearless of enemies, however powerful from their malignity or formidable from their rank. This extraordinary man was Boileau. If I am not deceived, there is something in all his compositions so finished, so removed from conceit or forced thought; such an ardent zeal for propriety in sentiment and expression; such a sense of the dignity of the human character when undebased; such a hatred of hypocrisy; such a love of purity; such an abhorrence of all profaneness, indecency, and even of indelicacy; that I am not able to name a man whose works, as a poet and a critic, may be read and studied with equal advantage. Even his compliments, though rather lofty, to Louis XIV, are all conceived in the language of a gentleman

1. *Recreations and Studies of a Country Gentleman of the Eighteenth Century*, 1882, p. 152.

2. *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, v. III, p. 11 (ed. London, 1846).

and a man of genius, who feels that he is conferring honour, not receiving it. The majesty of the French monarch, in that cultivated age, was surely as worthy of homage as the deity of the Roman Augustus. To read the works of Boileau with full advantage, some accuracy of knowledge, and some insight into the delicacy of the ancient French language, are required.... As a writer I think him original. What he has borrowed he almost seems to have restored to his (sic) proper place. He alternately assumes the characters of the three great Romans; and maintains an honourable contest for the mastery. Equal to either of them taken singly, and, in the merit of composition, sometimes their superior. He is their true and lawful brother. There is a fraternal league between them, which no friend to good literature, good poetry and good manners, will ever suffer to be broken."[1] Further references to and quotations from Boileau are scattered through the verses and notes of *Pursuits of Literature*; in one of the latter, Mathias calls Boileau "the most perfect of all modern writers in taste and judgment... I have always considered him as the most finished gentleman that ever wrote."[2]

Boileau also appears in the reviews in the last years of the century. The reviewer of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* in *The Monthly Review* for March, 1784, says: "The characters of Pope, Young and Boileau from the discourse of didactic poetry will, we flatter ourselves, be acceptable to most readers."[3] In the same periodical appears the following interesting remark in a review of D'Alembert's *History of the Members of the French Academy*: "Boileau was the first who formed the national taste of France and by his translations and imitations gave his countrymen a true relish for the epistles and satires of Horace, which before his time used to be much less esteemed than his odes."[4] *The European Magazine* of November, 1791, contains some Boileau anecdotes, with the remark: "Boileau, who was not a little caustic, thought like the late excellent Dr. Johnson, on two points, the profession of a player and the introduction of old phraseology into modern compositions"[5]; in the issue for April, 1792,

1. *Op. cit.*, 7 th ed. London, 1798, p. 34 ff.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 111, note b. See also pp. 251, 269, 287, 339, 340, 343, of the above edition.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. 70, p. 180.
4. *Ibid.*, v, 79, p. 648.
5. *Op. cit.*, v. 20, p. 347.

it gives the "singular opinion of Boileau" regarding the way to compose a good couplet by writing the last line first and how he taught Racine to "*rymer difficultement*" (sic), adding, "To how many poetasters of our times might the same advice be given, but it would not perhaps be so readily followed"[1]; and in May, 1799, it tells a well-known Boileau anecdote.[2] Boileau even turned up in the conversations taking place in public conveyances, as we learn from an entry in the diary of Thomas Holcroft, whose life Hazlitt wrote. On May 24, 1788, Holcroft takes the coach to see his dying father and a quaker gets into the coach. "Quaker", — so runs the entry — "listens to learned poetical discourse on unities, Shakespeare, Molière, Boileau, Pope, Gresset, Rousseau, Voltaire, Milton, etc. in raptures."[3]

It remains to glance at a few of the major figures in English literature in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Had Boileau any significance for the early Romantic poets not yet quite weaned from Classicism? We would hardly expect to find any reference to Boileau in Burns or Blake. We might have looked for a passing allusion, a conventional expression of deference to him in Cowper; but as a matter of fact, there is none.[4] As we shall see later, Crabbe may have read and imitated a poet who here and there comes near to being a French Crabbe himself; but I cannot discover that he ever mentions Boileau's name. Wordsworth possessed a copy of Boileau (in French), according to the catalogue for the posthumous sale of his books[5]; and he mentions Boileau's name in a letter written to William Mathews on March 21, 1796. "I attempt to write satires", he says, "and in all satires, whatever the authors may say, there will be found a spice of malignity. Neither Juvenal nor Horace were without it, and what shall we say of Boileau and Pope, or the more redoubted Peter? These are great names...."[6] It is a question whether the frequent allusions

1. *Op. cit.*, v. 21, p. 268.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 35, p. 306.
3. *Works of William Hazlitt* (ed. Waller and Glover), v. II, p. 166. [Life of Thomas Holcroft, Bk. IV, ch. 6.]
4. Cowper said of the poems of Madame de la Motte Guyon which he translated: "Her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud, with so much reason, in the compositions of Prior." See Hayley's *Life of Cowper* v. II, p. 51 (Quoted in Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XVIII, p. 590.)
5. *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, No. VI, p. 229. The edition was that published in 1768 in 3 volumes.
6. *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*. Ed. Knight, v. I, p. 107.

to "good sense" as an essential of poetry in the *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* can be taken as proof of a direct influence of Boileau on Wordsworth. It is interesting, however, even to know that he considered him once as a "great name". We are less surprised to find Samuel Rogers acquainted with so bookish a poet. Whether or not his *Epistle to a Friend* (1798) is indebted to Boileau[1], the Preface to it runs: "Every reader turns with pleasure to those passages of Horace and Pope and Boileau, which describe how they lived and where they dwelt; and which, being interspersed among their satirical writings, derive a secret and irresistible grace from the contrast and are admirable examples of what in painting is termed repose".

Finally it is the greatest English celebrity of the age, Edmund Burke, who is the main figure in the most vivid and picturesque glimpse of "Boileau in England" that history has vouchsafed to us. On June 18, 1792, Fanny Burney visited Mrs. Crewe at Hampstead. Burke was present. After dinner some people (Mr. and Mrs. Erskine) with whom Burke was on cool terms, entered. There are two accounts of what followed. Madame D'Arblay, in her diary, relates briefly as follows: "There was an evident disunion of the cordiality of the party from this time. My father, Mr. Richard Burke, his nephew and Mr. Elliott entered into some general discourse; Mr. Burke took up a volume of Boileau and read aloud, though to himself, and with a pleasure that soon made him seem to forget all intruders."[2] But the same narrator wrote a letter to her sister Susanna, Mrs. Philips, in which the scene is made to live, and this letter is preserved to us in her father's memoirs. I quote the passage at length, for it actually shows us Boileau in the English family circle. "Mr. Burke, meanwhile, with a concentrated but dignified air, walked away from them all, and threw himself on a settee at a distant part of the room. Here he picked up a book, which he opened by chance, and, to my great astonishment, began reading aloud! but not directing his face, voice or attention to any of the company. On the contrary, he read with the careless freedom from effort or restraint that he might have done had he been alone; and merely aloud, because, the book being in verse, he was willing to add the pleasure of sound to its sense. But what to me made this seem highly comic

1. See below, Book II, p. 223.
2. *Diary and Letters of Mme D'Arblay* (ed. Austin Dobson), v. 5, p. 96.

as well as intrepidly singular, was that the work was French; and he read it not only with the English accent, but exactly as if the two nations had one pronunciation in common of the alphabet. It was a volume of Boileau, which he had opened at the famed and incomparable *Epître à son jardinier*. Yet, while the delivery was so amusing, the tone, the meaning, the force he gave to every word, were so winning to my ears, that I should have listened to nothing else, if I had not unavoidably been engrossed by Mrs. Erskine... "[1]

1. *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, v. 3, pp. 170-171.

CHAPTER VI

DURING THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

The popular view undoubtedly is that Boileau's fame in England did not survive the eighteenth century. It might, indeed, seem that the toughest reputation could not long withstand such ferocious assaults as those delivered by Stockdale and Pinkerton in the later years of that century, especially when supported by the more restrained but also more thorough-going criticism of Warton, Kames, etc. The growing romantic spirit might seem sufficient in itself to snuff out so stiff a neo-classsic. But nothing in literary history is more striking than the tenacity of strongly-established reputations. The fresh enthusiasm of the encomiums quoted from Hayley, Mathias and Sherlock should be enough to put us on our guard against believing Boileau dead.

Yet, on the other hand, it is quite true that the nineteenth century does not hold in reserve for Boileau a very green old age. The year 1800 seems to mark more than a conventional mile-stone in the life of his reputation. After that date, the note of enthusiasm simply does not recur in references to him. The Indian summer of appreciation which he had enjoyed in the closing years of the eighteenth century was over. He still receives deference, but little homage ; and, though (with the possible exception of Keats and Landor) no attack on him equals in acerbity some of those made in the preceding age, that is not a fact from which he can draw much comfort, as it is one of the symptoms of men's growing indifference towards him. Another symptom is the impossibility — after 1800 — of ranking references to Boileau in two separate categories as we have done for the period 1750-1800. The two currents now coalesce into one rather colourless stream. The one novel characteristic of this period is the marked accentuation of the tendency to challenge Boileau's " correctness ", which we noted first in Kames. As for his claim to the title of " poet ", that had been settled long before this, and Keats, in his celebrated outburst in " Sleep and Poetry ", is merely flogging a dead horse.

It will be convenient, in this chapter, to review first the minor references to Boileau (that is to say, those occurring in the periodicals and in writers of minor standing) and then see what the major writers of the Romantic Age had to say of him.

Coming fresh from a study of the considerable place Boileau occupies in the periodical literature even of the late eighteenth century, one is struck at once, not by any diminution in the number of references made to him in the reviews of the early nineteenth century, but by the brevity and perfunctoriness of these notices. We meet but rarely with any extended criticism, favourable or otherwise, on Boileau; writers no longer expatiate on him, they merely allude to him, the occasion being perhaps the appearance of a new edition of his works, a translation, or merely the recollection of some of his verses which still remain the "proverbs" they became at birth. Anecdotes concerning Boileau are also popular at this time, and are very significant of the "legend" stage which his reputation has now reached.

The century was ushered in by the appearance in England both of an elaborate French edition of Boileau's works and of a translation (in separate book-form) of his Eighth Satire. *The Monthly Review*, in March, 1801, lists as Article 34 in its "Monthly Catalogue of Poetry", "Poésies de Boileau Despréaux, avec des notes historiques et grammaticales, etc., par M. de Levizac, 4 vol. 12mo, Dulau and Co. 1800", and reviews it as follows: "The lovers of French literature in England are obliged to the Abbé Levizac for several useful works which he has published during his residence here..... and now the poems of Boileau with as many notes as are necessary for understanding the allusions of that admirable poet. The few phrases or terms that, since his days, have become obsolete or unfashionable are noted with care and accuracy; and the essay on his life and writings is written, if not with eloquence, at least with ease and perspicuity; — but more, we think, might have been made of it. We have read over the four volumes with pleasure; and we only regret that the translation of Longinus and the other prose pieces of the author, accompany not the poems....."[1] In the same year appeared the anonymous translation above referred to[2], in the preface to which the translator states that, "sensible of the boldness of his attempt, he must only hope it may

1. *Op. cit.*, v. 115, p. 321.
2. See also Book II, p. 223.

induce an abler performance, and promote a further introduction to the writings of Boileau ; whose wit and satire always engaged on the side of morality and truth, have rendered his works important to the interests of mankind. "[1] Boileau sets out on his third century under favourable auspices.

Another notice of the same year, however, — also in *The Monthly Review* (for March) — shows the other side of the shield. The reviewer of " Select Eulogies of Members of the French Academy, with notes ; by the late M. D'Alembert. Translated from French, with Preface and additional notes by J. Aikin, M. D., 2 vols., 8 v°, pp. 360 in each, 10 s. boards, Cadell jun. and Davis, 1799 ", says : " Much good criticism is to be found in the eulogy on Boileau Despréaux ; which, indeed, required it more than any other in this first volume. The severity and sometimes the injustice of Boileau's satires are discussed by the eulogist ; who concludes by saying : ' Such are the faults, slight enough in substance, which may justly be imputed to Despréaux as a satirist, after we have rendered him all due homage as a great poet and as a legislator of taste ' : on which Dr. Aikin very justly observes ; ' These faults may not to all appear equally slight. They certainly indicate an acrimonious and unfeeling character, a high conceit of his own powers and consequence, and an unpardonable disregard of the happiness and reputation of others. There are many points of resemblance between Despréaux and his brother-satirist Pope, but, if the English poet had as much causticity as the French and more peevish irritability, he seems to have had a more feeling heart and a nicer sense of justice. ' "[2] This view that Despréaux is a more unscrupulous satirist than Pope (in the present writer's judgment, an untenable view) was to gain considerable vogue in the nineteenth century, and is even found among our contemporary critics.[3]

A reviewer in *The Anti-Jacobin Review* in October, 1801, refers to Boileau as one of " the greatest masters of criticism " and quotes his advice to authors to get a careful friend's counsel before publishing (" Un sage ami, toujours rigoureux, inflexible etc. " A.P.I, 199 ff.)[4] ; he is given a position equivalent to that of Virgil in Latin and of Pope in English in the history of French

1. *Op. cit.*, p. VII.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. 115, p. 258.
3. See, for example, Vaughan's *Literary Criticism.*
4. *Op. cit.*, v. X, p. 186.

versification in *The British Critic* for 1801 ; [1] *The Scots Magazine* for January, 1802, in its " Literary Extracts and Notices ", quotes La Harpe's praise of Boileau and Racine for teaching us " to imitate only nature and the ancients " and for proving " that love was better depicted in twenty verses of the *Aeneid* of Virgil than in all the romances of modern Europe " [2] ; Boileau's ridicule of the French romances of chivalry is referred to by Mrs Barbauld in 1804 [3] ; *The Retrospective Review* for 1825, refers to Boileau's remarks on the heroic novel in an article on the " Roman comique de Scarron " [4] ; and in *The Edinburgh Review* for July, 1805, his lines on the sonnet are quoted.

There appeared in 1808 the following work, of which I have been unable to find an extant copy : " The Satires of Boileau translated ; with some Account of that Poet's Life and Writings, 8 v°, 7 s., 6 d. Baldwin, 1808. " [5] It was given liberal notices in the reviews, which throw further light on the esteem in which Boileau was still held. *The Critical Review* for September, 1808, is slightly cryptic : " We will enter into no question as to the demand which may probably exist for a translation of the works of Boileau. Certainly no apology can be required either by ourselves or the public from the author for the attempt he has now communicated to us : on the contrary we feel highly indebted to him for his design of presenting to us in our native language the works of a writer who stands deservedly high in the opinion of all men of letters for the benefits which he has conferred upon his own. " [6] *The Monthly Review* of February, 1809, gives a great deal of space to the work, with copious quotations (which are my only source of knowledge of its contents) ; in the course of some strictures on the translator for his negligence, the reviewer says : " We are acquainted with no author of any age or nation, whose rules of good writing ought to be more attentively studied, or whose

1. *Op. cit.*, v. XVIII, p. 488.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. 64, p. 52.
3. *Life of Richardson, prefixed to his Correspondence*
4. *Op. cit.*, v. XII, Part 2, pp. 254, 260.
5. See further in Book II, p. 224. The " Literary Intelligence " column of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1808, (v. 78, p. 435) contains the following announcement : " A Translation of the Satires of Boileau, with some Account of his Life and Writings may shortly be expected ". This is undoubtedly the work under consideration.
6. *Op. cit.* Series III, v. 15, pp. 26 ff.

example can be more advantageously copied, than those of Boileau; his larger treatises are estimable repositories of sound criticism; while even his most ordinary publications, his prefaces, advertisements, and *avis au lecteur*, abound with just philosophy and acute observation." [1] The reviewer in *The British Critic* for February, 1809, doubts, on the other hand, whether Boileau's satires "will at this time of day excite much curiosity, and particularly as the translation rigidly preserves the names and personages characterized by Boileau..... Cotin, Chapelain, the Perrins, Pelletiers, Colletets and Pradons will perhaps now only excite a stare of astonishment and the exclamation of, Who are these people?" [2]

The reviewer of Bowles' poems in *The Quarterly Review* for November, 1809, disapproving of the sonnet in English, says; "We are aware that this species of poem is highly esteemed in other countries, particularly in France, where the authority of Boileau may be cited by the advocates of the sonnet, both in support of its merit and of the extreme difficulty of its composition. But the best of the modern French writers have ventured to dissent from this opinion; and La Harpe has not hesitated to affirm that the decision of this great critic is more to be attributed to a servile compliance with the fashion of the time, than to his own candid and unbiased judgment." [3] The reviewer of a life of Huet in the same periodical for August, 1810, says, speaking of Huet's literary friends: "The names of Petavius, Bochart, of the Scaligers, Bossuet, Vossius, Du Cange, Boileau, etc. sound with no common distinction in the ear of every scholar" [4]; and, again, in *The Quarterly* (May, 1811), the reviewer of the Letters of M^me^ du Deffand says she had acquired her taste for the "natural" before "the prettyisms of Thomas and Boismont or the sterile rhetoric of D'Alembert had supplanted the masculine beauties of Boileau, Racine and Bossuet." [5]

The Critical Review in 1809 notices the following edition of Boileau: "Œuvres complètes de Boileau. The Whole Works of Boileau. Stereotype ed. 3 vol. 8 v^o^, Paris, 1809", because it claims it affords "the only complete collection of Boileau's works

1. *Op. cit.*, v. 139, p. 200.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. 23, p. 184.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. II, p. 281.
4. *Ibid.*, v. IV, p. 108.
5. *Ibid.*, v. V, p. 504.

ever published. The admirers of this celebrated author will here meet with every scrap that could be procured of his writings, the authenticity of which was at all ascertained." [1] In June, 1810, the same periodical, in the course of a review of Aikin's translation of Huet's Autobiography, refers to the Huet-Boileau controversy and remarks: "If we smile at the extravagance of Boileau, the nettled contempt of Huet is not less laughable, when with affected moderation and candour, he gives the following by way of character of a man whose *works* will most *probably* live when his own *name* is forgotten." [2] Again, in the next year, *The Critical Review* advises a sermonizing author to take to heart the example of "prudence and self-command" Boileau gives in his *Epître XI*, vs. 113–116, which he quotes." [3]

The Monthly Review for 1811 (Appendix) quotes a half-page *éloge* of Boileau from "Les Tombeaux du XVIII[e] siècle (Paris, 1811, 2 vol.), par A. Miéville." [4] *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1814, in a review of Chalmers' *English Poets*, touching on the ornate style of Pope's Homer, quotes Boileau's lines on the need of the poet's embellishing and ennobling everything he treats. [5] *The Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1815, quotes from "The Flowers of Wit. By the Rev. Henry Ketts, 2 vol." a remark of Boileau to the effect that the best epigrams originate in conversation, along with the epigram of Boileau alleged to be his own favourite. [6] *The British Critic* for November, 1817, reviewing the "Mémoires du Marquis de Dangeau", refers to and quotes from Boileau's Fifth Satire (dedicated to Dangeau). [7] *The New Monthly Magazine* for December 1817, devotes a page to anecdotes regarding Boileau's life at his villa at Auteuil. [8] *The Quarterly Review* for July, 1818, dealing with the same "Mémoires du Marquis de Dangeau" mentioned above, pits against the sneers of "the sour and inaccurate St Simon" at Dangeau's family the fact that "a writer of the nice taste and admirable good sense of Boileau selected him from all the grandees of France for the apostrophe

1. *Op. cit.* Series 3, v. 18, p. 513.
2. *Op. cit.* Series 3, v. 20, p. 125.
3. *Op. cit.* Series 3, v. 22, p. 178.
4. *Op. cit.*, v. 147, p. 513.
5. *Op. cit.*, v. XIV, p. 85. See further in Book IV.
6. *Op. cit.*, v. LXXXV, Part I, p. 243.
7. *Op. cit.*, N. S. v. VIII, p. 498.
8. *Op. cit.*, v. VIII, p. 418.

with which his poem opens" (quoting the first four lines of Satire V).[1] *The British Critic* for January, 1818, repeats the hoary tale of Addison opening Boileau's eyes to English literature by presenting him with a copy of the *Musae Anglicanae*.[2] *The Edinburgh Review* for February, 1818, links Horace, Vida, Boileau and Pope as poets of taste rather than genius.[3] *The New Monthly Magazine* for August, 1818, says: "Boileau and Racine praise no person's verses but their own. They assume the character of universal critics, and not a ballad escapes their censure. Their powers of versification are good, but their erudition very superficial. Boileau fancied he possessed a secret worth knowing in the composition of poetry; he always made the *second* line of his couplet before the *first*, in order, as he said, to infuse greater energy and compression by confining the sense to narrow limits. It is, perhaps, the adoption of this plan which has given such epigrammatic turns to many passages in his writings."[4] *The Quarterly Review* for April, 1819, speaking of Ariosto, says: "We cannot judge of ancient decency by a modern standard. The Queen of Navarre imitated the Decameron; and Boileau, the stern guardian of public morals, drew a parallel between La Fontaine and Ariosto, and invited the French public to the perusal of an indecent novel."[5] "Bowles' Answer to Campbell" in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July, 1819, contains the following passage: "Let me not however be considered as thinking that the subject alone constitutes poetical excellency. The execution is to be taken into account at the same time; for, with Lord Hervey, we might fall asleep over the Creation of Blackmore but be alive to the touches of animation and satire in Boileau."[6] *The New Monthly Magazine* for September and November, 1819, under the rubric "Foreign Varieties" narrates the removal of Boileau's ashes from the Petits-Augustins to St. Germain-des-Prés with an account of the ceremonies.[7] *The Monthly Magazine* for January, 1822, has an essay of four pages on "the comparative pretensions of Pope and Boileau."[8] *The*

1. *Op. cit.*, v. XIX, p. 462.
2. *Op. cit.*, N. S. v. IX, p. 103.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. 29, p. 467.
4. *Op. cit.*, v. X, p. 46.
5. *Op. cit.*, v. XXI, p. 490.
6. *Op. cit.*, v. V, p. 338.
7. *Op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 215, 461.
8. *Op. cit.*, v. 52, p. 489.

European Magazine for March, 1822, publishes an "Essay on Pope's Art of Criticism" (a long commentary continued through several numbers) in which a page is devoted to a review of Boileau's works apropos of Pope's line, "And Boileau still in right of Horace sways", which shows no sign that Boileau's reputation had declined with the writer. On the other hand, the newer point of view in criticism appears in *The Quarterly Review* for July, 1823, where a reviewer, speaking of the corruption of Spanish drama by imitation of French rules, says: "It is remarkable that Juan de la Cueva wrote a kind of Ars Poetica for the very purpose of overthrowing the rules of the ancients... The poem of Cueva, certainly the effusion of a much vaster mind than the *Art Poétique* of Boileau, became the dramatic code of his country."[1] *The Monthly Magazine* for March, 1824, contains an anecdote about Racine and Boileau.[2] An article on "Minor French Poetry" in *The Retrospective Review* for 1824, distinguishes English poetry as poetry of *emotion*, classical French poetry as poetry of *ideas*. "We need not" continues the article, "say Boileau or Racine; let the reader try a page of Pope and a scene of Shakespeare, and he will feel the difference between the poetry of *ideas* and that of *emotion*. This also explains the reason why the disciples of Coleridge and Wordsworth and the whole of the ultra-Shakespearians have altogether denied the title of poet to Pope and his French prototypes. They do not understand each other. For a man who looks for ideas, the terms of art of the school of emotion are without meaning; for the man of passion so are the theorems of Boileau. To the Englishman, Boileau is somewhat worse than a bad philosopher; to the Frenchman, Shakespeare is little better than a madman."[3] *The Retrospective Review* for 1825, criticizing Mlle de Scudéry's prolix descriptions, says: "As Boileau says, she will never let the reader get out of a house until she has taken an inventory of the furniture."[4] The remarks of *The Quarterly Review* and *The Westminster Review* anent Landor's criticism of Boileau in his "Imaginary Conversation", which date also from 1824, will be considered along with Landor later in this chapter. That Boileau was still the most widely-read French classic might be inferred from his representative position in the

1. *Op. cit.*, v. XXIX, p. 425.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. LVII, Part I, p. 42.
3. *Op. cit.*, v. X, p. 200.
4. *Op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 260.

following attack on classical education in an article entitled " Present System of Education " in *The Westminster Review* for July, 1825 : " Let the man who can now speak and write Latin, let him who can read the poets, philosophers and historians with the facility of pleasure that he reads Hume and Milton, or even Boileau and Tasso, answer whether he acquired these powers at school, or whether he is not self-educated. " [1] *The Quarterly Review* in October, 1825, in a review of Roscoe's edition of Pope, says apropos of the *Essay on Criticism* : " The Art Poétique of Boileau is well entitled ' Art poétique en vers ' ; for its verse is nearly the only pretension by which it can aspire to please more than an essay in prose might have done ; whilst our countryman's illustrations of wit and beauty are so thickly scattered, yet so judiciously arranged, that his rules of art and sentences of wisdom appear always as ' il frutto senil sul giovenile fiore '. " [2] Finally, in *The Monthly Magazine* for November, 1827, we come on our last journalistic item, and it has a brusque finality that harmonizes with its chronological position. Under the rubric " Canons of Criticism ", a writer asks : " Can anybody nowadays sit out a tragedy that preserves the unities ? and is not the code of Boileau and of Horace as obsolete as the laws of the Brehons or those of Lewark Hen ? " [3]

However insignificant and disconnected these journalistic items may appear from a critical point of view, they are at least of value as proving that particles of Boileau's reputation still permeated the literary atmosphere in the early nineteenth century, like volcanic dust long after an eruption. It may surprise some readers to discover that several of the greater minds of the Romantic Period in England were concerned with much more than " particles " of that reputation, that it seemed to some of the singers and critics of the new age worth while to scrutinize very carefully — even if often unfavourably — the style and thought of Boileau.

Of course, some of the greatest — like Cowper and Blake in the preceding age — are absolutely silent on the subject of Boileau. Usually this is symptomatic of a general ignorance of the French literature — and language. Most notable of the men who have

1. *Op. cit.*, v. IV, p. 156.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. XXXII, pp. 297-8.
3. *Op. cit.*, New Series, v. IV, p. 473.

turned their backs utterly upon French culture are Coleridge and Lamb. There is abundant evidence of Coleridge's blankness where French things are concerned. In a letter to John Thelwall, dated Nov. 19, 1796, he says: "I am just going to read Dupuis' twelve octavos, which I have got from London. I shall read only one octavo a week, for I cannot speak French at all, and I read it slowly." [1] De Quincey, who was in a position to know, gives more than one confirmation of Coleridge's words. In his *Coleridge and Opium-Eating* he says: "As to French, Coleridge read it with too little freedom to find pleasure in French literature. Accordingly, we never recollect his referring, for any purpose, either of argument or illustration, to a French classic;" [2] and in his essay on *Style*, where he is speaking of the opinion of Madame de Staël held by Coleridge and by Goethe and Schiller, he remarks: "The Germans at least *read* French, and talked it slowly, and occasionally understood it when talked by others; but Coleridge did none of these things." [3] Lamb's ignorance of French is equally well attested. [4]

The great popular Dioscuri of the earlier half of the Romantic Period — Scott and Byron — were, on the other hand, well aware of Boileau's existence. We would not expect Scott, who was after all half an eighteenth-century man, to be ungenerous to Boileau. As a matter of fact, his references to him are quite colourless, but they are not infrequent. They occur mainly in his critical essays. In the essay on *The Drama* (1819?), Boileau is mentioned and quoted several times, (1) on the mediaeval French drama, (2) on the *cabale* against the *Cid*, (3) on the unities, (4) on

1. *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Boston & New York, 1895, v. I, p. 181. Letter n° LXIV.

2. *De Quincey's Works*, Masson ed. v. V., p. 203.

3. *Ibid.*, v. X, p. 284.

4. See E.V. Lucas, *Life of Charles Lamb* (London, 1905), v. I, p. 249; v. II, p. 368. Yet we must note the following anecdote from the "Hazlettiana", which, however, on the whole, confirms our statement. "Mr. Lamb has lately taken it into his head to read St. Evremont, and works of that stamp. I neither praise nor blame him for it. He observed that St. Evremont was a writer half-way betwen Montaigne and Voltaire, with a spice of the wit of the one and the sense of the other. I said I was always of the opinion that there had been a great many clever people in the world, both in France and England, but I had been sometimes rebuked for it. Lamb took this as a slight reproach, for he had been a little exclusive and national in his tastes". *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, 1867, v. II, p. 296 [ch. xxii, Hazlettiana, Part 2 — Literary Reminiscences].

reason and common sense against Aristotelian pedantry (" un pédant enivré de sa vaine science "). [1] In the essay on *Molière* (which appeared in 1828 in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*) we have a passing reference to the Abbé Cotin who " had obtained in the satires of Boileau a painful immortality. " [2] One can picture Scott, like Burke, really relishing the strong common sense and ringing, masculine verse of Boileau.

Byron's attitude towards Boileau was notoriously different. Of course, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is the last great triumph of that particular form of satire that Boileau — as I hope to show later — taught the English ; and, in general, Byron's work is permeated with the Bolevian spirit (though curiously blended with the quite different spirit of Italian mock-heroic or burlesque). Whether he had any first-hand acquaintance with Boileau or not I cannot discover. At all events, his Gallophobia, his admiration for Tasso, and, above all, his dislike of French metre (which we found declining in reputation in the eighteenth century) combine to produce the following outburst in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* where he is singing Tasso's praises : -

> ..... with a glory round his furrow'd brow,
> Which emanated then, and dazzles now
> In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
> And Boileau whose rash envy could allow
> No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
> That whetstone of the teeth — monotony in wire ! [3]

As I pointed out in a previous chapter, Byron is the most striking example of the type which reconciles worship of Pope with hatred of Boileau. This type had already appeared in the later years of the eighteenth century, but would have been utterly incomprehensible at an earlier date, when to say Pope was to say Boileau. [4]

One might expect to glean many references to Boileau in the works of him who was reputed to be the most widely-read of all the Romantic group, Robert Southey ; but apparently his usual catholicity of taste and sanity of judgment did not extend to French literature ; there he shared the blindness of most of the

1. *Miscellaneous Prose Works* (Edinburgh, 1834), v. VI.
2. *Ibid.*, v. XVII. There are other minor references to Boileau in the same essay.
3. *Op. cit.*, Canto IV, Stanza 38. See also Book IV, ch. IV.
4. See Book I, Chapter IV, p. 53.

great English men of letters of his time. We know on the best authority[1] that "French he disliked exceedingly"; and, as if to show his contempt for the language whimsically, he addressed the most atrociously ungrammatical letters in it to John King[2]. He thought Ronsard "would have been a great poet if he had not been a Frenchman... but poetry of the higher order is as impossible in that language as in Chinese."[3] He goes "with Schlegel the whole length of reprobating French taste in its master-pieces, as false in its essential principles, and pernicious in its inevitable consequences."[4] How wide his reading was in this literature he despised is not easy to determine. It may have been his modesty more than anything else which made him reject a publisher's proposal that he should write a sketch of a general history of poetry, "because of German, Italian and French poetry I have not enough knowledge;"[5] he admits on one occasion that, in London, he "hunted the book-stalls with some success as to French poetry;"[6] and he had the curiosity to look into one cobweb-covered corner of French literature.[7] He had read Boileau's strictures on Chapelain before 1797; "though the habit of writing satire, as, indeed, the indulgence of any kind of wit, insensibly influences the moral character, and disposes it to sacrifice any thing to a good point, yet Boileau must have had some reason for the extrême contempt in which he held this unfortunate production."[8] He had read the *Lutrin*, but makes no critical comment on it.[9] There is also a note in Southey's *Commonplace Book* on Boileau's criticism of Molière's use of dialect, evidently quoted from the edition of Molière Southey was reading.[10]

1. That of his son, Rev. Charles. Cuthbert Southey, See *The Life & Correspondence of Robert Southey* (ed. by this son), ch. xxxvi (New-York, 1855, p. 525).

2. See *Selections from the letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by his son-in-law J. W. Warter (London, 1856), v. I, pp. 186-192.

3. Letter to Landor. Feb. 3, 1815, *Life & Correspondence*, ch. xix (ed. cit., p. 312).

4. *Letters of Southey* (ed. Warter), v. II, pp. 340-1. To J. N. White, Dec. 12, 1813.

5. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 98. To C. W. W. Wynn, Feb. 20, 1800.

6. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 71. To T. Southey, May 12, 1799.

7. Chapelain's *La Pucelle*. See *Life & Correspondence*, ch. v (ed. cit., pp. 98-99). To J. May. June 6 and June 11, 1797.

8. *Ibid.*, ch. v, p. 98.

9. *Letters of Southey* (ed. cit.), v. I, p. 55. To C. W. W. Wynn, May 11, 1798.

10. *Op. cit.* Third series, ed. by J. W. Warter, 1850, p. 298.

Southey's protégé, Kirke White, quotes Boileau's lines on the sonnet as a motto for an essay on the sonnet, and those on rhyme as the motto of another essay [1]. This is remarkable when we consider that White was only twenty-one when he died. Thomas Campbell, in his *Essay on English Poetry* (1819), says: "Pope gave our heroic couplet its strictest melody and tersest expression. 'D'un mot mis en sa place il enseigne le pouvoir'." [2] The most striking case of the persistence of Boileau's prestige in the mind of a Romantic poet is to be found in Thomas Moore. His letters and diary are full of references to Boileau. Of course we must remember that Moore had *velléités* for satire, which no doubt explains his pre-occupation with Boileau. In 1812, he writes to his mother: "I am collecting a library..... Tell Kate she must leave her Boileau to me in her will." [3] The next year comes the almost amusing reminder: "You can let me have my Boileau that Kate left." [4] This at the moment when the *Irish Melodies* were singing in his mind! On November 7, 1821, occurs this entry: "Off at seven in the Dover coach; two Frenchmen our companions; talked of the niceties of the French language. *Parle par ma voix* in Racine wrong. Boileau full of faults of grammar, as I had already known from Saint-Marc's notes. *Je ne... m'en rappelle pas* wrong...." [5] Many years later, on June 6, 1829, Moore notes in his diary that he "discussed with Mackintosh the difficulties of French poetry; the faults that grammarians find with Boileau and Racine. Mackintosh quoted the lines of Boileau [the beginning of the epistle to Molière] where the *vein* is clumsily made the agent in writing — 'Dont la fertile veine ignore en écrivant.....'" [6] Beyond our *terminus ad quem* occur the following entries: "March 30, 1834. [Speaking of Boileau's lines:

> Louis les animant du feu de son courage,
> Se plaint de sa grandeur qui l'attache au rivage.]

We tried to cobble out among us a translation of them:

1. *Melancholy Hours*, No. 5.
2. *Specimens of the British Poets* (ed. London, 1841), p. LXXXVI.
3. *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, ed. by Lord John Russell, London, 1853, v. I, p. 273, Letter No. 168.
4. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 338, No. 227.
5. *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 301.
6. *Ibid.*, v. VI, p. 46.

Louis, all fire, laments his royal rank,
Which, spite of courage, nails him to the bank " ;[1]

and this, " April 7, 1834. Talked at breakfast of the difficulties of the French language, the grammatical incorrectnesses that appear in the best poets. Several pointed out by St. Marc even in Boileau. Boileau's ' C'est à vous, mon esprit '. " [2] What is striking here is the resumption of that tendency to challenge Boileau's " correctness " which we noticed in the late eighteenth century and particularly in Kames.

We now come to the one nineteenth-century reference to Boileau that everybody knows. It occurs in that outburst in Keats's " Sleep and Poetry ", which perhaps constitutes the finest expression of Romantic indignation over the alleged delinquencies of Neoclassicism that exists in English. The poet has been recalling the ancient glories of English poetry :

Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloyed
With honours; nor had any other care
Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair.

Then he exclaims :

Could all this be forgotten ? Yes, a schism
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
Men were thought wise who could not understand
His glories; with a puling infant's force
They swayed about upon a rocking-horse,
And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal souled !
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean rolled
Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer nights collected still to make
The morning precious: beauty was awake !
Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of, — were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :

1. *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, v. VII, p. 29.
2. *Ibid.*, v. VII, p. 30.

A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race!
That blasphemed the bright lyrist to his face,
And did not know it, — no, they went about,
Holding a poor, decrepit standard out,
Marked with most flimsy mottoes, and in large
The name of one Boileau.

I have quoted the whole passage, despite its length, because it is necessary to the understanding of the final sneering reference. The first half is evidently directed against the unimaginative, un-"poetical" character of neo-classic verse; it simply repeats Joseph Warton's charge against Boileau; and it is, from the Romantic point of view, a perfectly justifiable indictment of him as the leader of that particular school of poetry. But the second half of the passage goes farther; by his references to "musty laws", "wretched rule", and "compass vile", Keats obviously means to identify Boileau with the narrowest school of Aristotelian formalists, the school to which d'Aubignac and Le Bossu belong, and to throw upon him full responsibility for its dominance in England. As a matter of fact, this dominance is wholly imaginary; this school never had any but a slender foothold in England (Thomas Rymer is its only complete representative). But, whatever its influence may have been, Boileau is not to be held responsible for it. This is a point of considerable importance, and will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter [1]. Suffice it to say here that in these lines Keats did a great injustice to Boileau, by fixing upon him the stigma of being a mere "rules"-critic — a stigma which Keats's vigorous lines established in the popular judgment and which has remained in it since that day and is not eradicated yet.

The question arises, was Keats competent to give a judgment on Boileau? Had he even read him? There is no evidence on this point, but this is the only place where he ever mentions him. He had, of course, read and translated from Ronsard, whose works, he says, "have great beauties".[2] He had certainly no profound knowledge of the French language nor any high opinion of it. One of his best modern editors, pointing out a faulty French phrase "esprit du corps" in one of Keats's letters, says his "French was certainly

1. See Book, IV, ch. VII.

2. *Poetry & Prose by John Keats* (ed. by H. Buxton Forman, 1890), v. III, pp. 226-228.

not particularly good " ; [1] and, in a letter to Fanny Keats (from Oxford, Sept. 10, 1817), he pays his respects as follows to the French language : " It is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the tower of Babel, and when you come to know that the real use and greatness of a tongue is to be referred to its literature — you will be astonished to find how very inferior it is to our native speech. "[2] He continues with the wish that Italian might supersede French in all the schools. I am afraid we must conclude that Keats's critical *chevauchée* against Boileau is a case of " facit indignatio versum ".

If Shelley felt this indignation, he kept it to himself ; as far as I know, he never mentions Boileau. The great wit of the period, Sydney Smith, may have known Boileau ; in " A Treatise on Wit and Humour ", written when he was in Edinburgh, but not published in his lifetime, he relates an anecdote about Boileau and his brother [3] ; but anecdotes about Boileau were at this time such common property, that no great conclusion can be drawn from that. The Scotch philosopher, Dugald Stewart, was one of the warmest of Boileau's late admirers. References to him occur frequently in his later works. In his *Philosophical Essays* (1810, which deal with aesthetic problems), he quotes Boileau's " Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable " in a note to a discussion on " the improbable possible " in art [4], and, in the same work, speaking of how a man belittled in his lifetime, is praised after death, he pays this high tribute to Boileau's lines on the death of Molière (Epître VII) : " To the truth of these remarks the experience of all ages has borne testimony ; but I do not recollect any passage in which the fact which has given occasion to them is touched upon with more pathos and with a deeper insight into human character than in the following lines ", and he quotes the passage beginning, " Avant qu'un peu de terre, obtenu par prière..... "[5] In his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1827), speaking of the unpracticality of the poet, he says : " It is difficult to guess who the French poets were among Boileau's contemporaries to whom he alluded in the following verses ", quoting lines 125-132 of Canto IV of the *Art Poétique*,

1. *Poetry & Prose by John Keats*, v. III, p. 129.
2. *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 79.
3. S. J. Reid, *Life & Times of Sydney Smith* (London, 1884), p. 83.
4. *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart* (Edinburgh, 1855), v. V, p. 271.
5. *Ibid.*, v. V, p. 379.

beginning, " Travaillez pour la gloire, et qu'un sordide gain, etc. " [1]

We have left to consider Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and Landor, two of whom were among the greatest critics of their day, while the third deals with Boileau more minutely than any other nineteenth-century writer.

Hazlitt, who was notoriously the most ignorant of the three where foreign literatures were concerned, mentions Boileau several times, and had probably read him in the original. His opinion of him seems to have been favourable, on the whole; his feeling for him was warm enough to make him come to his defence against the attacks of Landor. In general, Hazlitt does not seem to have shared the widespread contempt of his time for French literature, though he has on the other hand no great enthusiasm for it. In the well-known *Lecture on Wit and Humour* (1819), after a most inadequate paragraph on Molière, he says: " A writer of some pretentions among ourselves has reproached the French with ' an equal want of books and men '. There is a common French print, in which Molière is represented reading one of his plays in the presence of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, to a circle of the wits and first men of his own time. Among these are the great Corneille; the tender, faultless Racine; Fontaine, the artless old man, unconscious of immortality; the accomplished St. Evremond; the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the severe anatomizer of the human breast; Boileau the flatterer of courts and judge of men! Were these men nothing? They have passed for men (and great ones) hitherto, and though the prejudice is an old one, I should hope it may still last our time. " [2] In the *Lectures on the English Poets* (lecture VI), he refers to Prior's imitations of " Boileau's servile addresses to Louis XIV. " [3] The answer to Landor will be taken up after we have reviewed the latter's criticism of Boileau. [4]

Leigh Hunt undoubtedly came into closer contact with Boileau than Hazlitt did. In his scattered critical writings I have come across a good many references to the French poet; and there are probably others in articles that have eluded my search. [5] In a letter

1. *Op. cit.* (Edinburgh, 1844), Part III, ch. I, section IV.
2. *Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. Glover & Waller, v. VIII, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, v. V, p. 106.
4. See p. 103.
5. There is, of course, no collected edition of Hunt's works, and it is an almost hopeless undertaking to trace all his critical writings in periodicals.

to Miss Kent from Florence, dated June 2, 1824, Hunt describes a few select books which constituted his library in his writing-room; Boileau's works were among them [1]. Did Hunt carry Boileau to Italy as a prophylactic against the possible too sensuous fascination of Italian literature? At all events, the latter's presence in a select travelling library is certainly significant. Yet Hunt does not seem to have read French with much facility. In a letter to Mr. Hunter, dated January, 1805, he describes his preparations for writing an *Essay on Heroi-Comic Poetry and Tassoni* : " I am now reading Boileau's *Lutrin* for the second time, after wading through it with the help of a dictionary and execrating all the irregular verbs in the French language [2]. Only conceive, after all this, that I have the impudence to say something of it in my essay. " [3] Hunt is much more concerned with the *Lutrin* than English critics have been for some time. In an essay on " Sentimental Comedy " (1807), he compares the latter's mixture of comedy and tragedy to " the mixture of seriousness and pleasantry " in Ariosto's *Orlando* and Boileau's *Lutrin* ; and then attaches the following note : " Boileau calls his *Lutrin* ' un ouvrage de pure plaisanterie ', and yet after five humorous cantos he introduces a serious allegory of Piety and Justice to compliment his friend M. de Lamoignon. This unexpected serious (?) had been placed with much less offence in any part of the mock-heroic rather than the end ; it is an awkward thing for a reader to rise from a ludicrous performance with a grave face. " [4] " A Word on Translation from the Poets " in *The Indicator* (1820-21), mentions Boileau along with Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Petrarch as suffering from bad translations. [5] In *The Liberal* (1822-23 ?) Hunt drew a parallel between Boileau and Pope as follows : " As Terence was called half Menander, so Boileau is half Pope. He wants Ariel; he wants his invisible world; he wants that poetical part of poetry which consists in bringing a remote and creative fancy to wait on the more obvious wit and graces that lie about

1. *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, v. I, p. 221.

2. The painfulness with which these early nineteenth-century men construed their French is in striking contrast with the facility of the eighteenth century in that respect, and shows vividly the decadence of French studies.

3. *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt* (1862), v. I, p. 14.

4. *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres*, 1807, Section 2.

5. *Op. cit.*, chap. II.

us. " In the same essay he bestows great praise on the exordium of the *Lutrin*.[1] In his well-known essay " What is Poetry? " (1844), Hunt repeats the well-worn story of Boileau's metrical dodges ; " Boileau's trick for appearing to rhyme naturally was to compose the second line of his couplet first! which gives one the crowning idea of the ' artificial school of poetry ' ".

We have now arrived at the last stopping-place before our *terminus*, William Savage Landor's " Imaginary Conversation between himself and the Abbé Delille. "[2] And no more fitting close to the history of Boileau's reputation could be imagined than this *critique* of Landor's ; for, taken in conjunction with the replies it called forth, it constitutes nothing less than a threshing-out of the whole case for and against Boileau as he appeared to Englishmen in the last years of the Romantic Age. Two men of the front rank, Landor and Hazlitt, take opposite sides in the debate : and two of the leading reviews, *The Quarterly* and *The Westminster*, devote able articles to it. All the avenues of attack on Boileau's position which had been opened up separately in the eighteenth century, Warton's challenge to his right to be called a poet, Kames's riddling of his reputation for " correctness ", the growing dislike of French prosody, the irritation over his criticism of Tasso[3], — all these converge into one forum in Landor's " conversation. " It is therefore a *locus* of very special importance and deserves careful examination. Unfortunately its great length — it extends through forty pages (not all, but most, dealing directly with Boileau) — and the detailed character of it make it difficult to summarize, but its main lines have been already indicated above.

For any one acquainted with Landor, it will hardly be necessary to expatiate on the character of the criticism. Like all of " the mad Jacobin's ", it is indeed the negation of criticism. He simply constitutes himself prosecuting attorney, and makes out the strongest possible case against the accused. Even Professor Saintsbury, who will not be suspected of undue indulgence in this case, admits that Landor has been unfair to Boileau.[4] But, as I have said, unfairness

1. *Op. cit.*, Quoted in Mrs. M. W. Shelley's *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of France* (ed. 1838), v. I, p. 271, from which I have taken it.
2. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, pp. 91-131.
3. See Book IV, ch. IV.
4. *History of Criticism*, v. III, p. 279.

was to be expected. The point of practical interest is, has Landor's outburst any importance as an *ex parte* statement? In the first place, it has an indirect, incidental importance in that its violence provoked, as probably nothing else could have done, some interesting pleas for the defence. But its direct value should not be overlooked; in spite of the prejudices and the faulty knowledge of French pronunciation and versification manifested in Landor's article, it undoubtedly presents the strongest, completest, and most *documenté* statement of the case against Boileau — especially in refutation of his claim to " correctness " — that exists in English.

The very vehemence and minuteness of Landor's indictment of Boileau would, in itself, lead us to suspect that there must still have existed, in 1824, a considerable body of pro-Bolevian opinion which he felt it would require all his energy to overthrow. But, as a matter of fact, Landor himself leaves us in no doubt as to this; for, at the foot of one of the pages of the dialogue, appears the following note: " Our popular critics have never suspected that Boileau is deficient in correctness of thought or expression. It is chiefly for the edification of those who recommend him as a model that this dialogue was written. A grub, if hooked with dexterity, may catch a tunny. " [1] It is, of course, unnecessary to point out to the reader of this book that Landor exaggerated in saying that no one had suspected Boileau's deficiency in correctness. Here the main incentive to the writing of the dialogue is shown to be the desire to discredit Boileau as a model of " correctness of thought or expression "; and this is, in fact, the main avenue of Landor's attack. Kames had opened up this avenue many years before, and Boileau's incorrectness had curiously preoccupied Moore; but no one had ever marshalled such an array of damaging passages as Landor was to do. It takes Landor some time to get to Boileau (the first ten pages are mainly concerned with a belittlement of French poetry in general and Voltaire's in particular and a corresponding exaltation of the Italian poets, especially Metastasio, Chiabrera and Filicaja), but at last, after Landor's praise of Filicaja, Delille asks: " Do you really then prefer this Italian to Boileau? His Ode to the King is fine ", and Landor replies: " There is nearly as much difference between his ode and the Italian, as between Sobieski and Louis..... Give me the volume, if that in your hand is it.

1. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, p. 98.

The *high* wisdom of a *young* hero is not the *tardy* fruit of *slow old age*. Dear Abbé, can you ever have read this commencement, and call the Author a man of genius or taste?

> ..... Ma Muse tremblante
> Fuit d'un si *grand fardeau* la charge *trop pesante*.

Vulgarity in the metaphor and redundance in the expression; and look! it occurs again at the conclusion. Addison tells you that he does, what he gives no sign of doing, that he

> *Bridles* in his struggling Muse with pain.

But it is better to turn a Muse into a mare than into a mule or ass, which Boileau does; and Addison has redeemed the wretchedness of his poetry by the suavity and humour of his prose:

> Et tandis que ton bras des peuples *redouté*
> Va le foudre à la main rétablir l'équité.

I always fancied that the *foudre* is rather a destroyer than an establisher. But why was the arm of Louis feared by the nations, if it was armed only to establish equity? The arm with the thunderbolt in the hand is worse than tautology.

Let us turn to the *Satires*." [1]

This passage opens the dance and it serves as a fair specimen of the vivisection of Boileau's verses that continues for about twenty pages. Line after line, couplet after couplet — all selected at apparent hazard but really with a hawk-like eye for every instance of the flat and the tautological — are subjected to similar withering comments, nearly always niggling and censorious, often flippant and even silly, but usually hitting in the bull's-eye that tendency to pointlessness and redundance that does really beset much of Boileau's average verse. It is unnecessary to add that not a single one of Boileau's good or famous lines is quoted. [2] Nemesis had come at last upon the great critic and satirist who had

1. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, pp. 98-99.
2. With the possible exception of the following:
> " L'honneur est comme une île escarpée et sans bords:
> On n'y peut plus entrer dès qu'on en est dehors.

The simile is imperfect, because the fact is untrue. If an island can be entered once it can be entered twice. " *Op. cit.*, v. IV, p. 108. And even this is quoted to be ridiculed with niggling criticism.

insisted upon purity of diction above all else. Sometimes, indeed, the voice of real criticism is heard; Boileau must, I am afraid, plead guilty to a large part of the following impeachment : " In Boileau there is really more of diffuseness than of brevity : few observe it, because it abounds in short sentences : and few are aware that sentences may be very short and the writer very prolix : as half a dozen stones rising out of a brook give the passenger more trouble than a plank across it. "[1]

Though it is Boileau's reputation for " correctness" that Landor is particularly anxious to demolish, he does not forget the other breaches that had already been opened in his armour. He devotes a page to rescuing Tasso from his clutches.[2] Next to his " incorrectness ", however, it is Boileau's versification that repels Landor. Sneers at French prosody are scattered through the dialogue. Speaking of Voltaire as a critic, he says : " When he calls the French poetry strong and energetic, he shows himself insensible that the nature both of the language and of the metre prohibits it. "[3] Again, " if the Romans had been obliged to split their heroic verses down the back like broiled mackarel " is a picturesque but uncomplimentary phrase for describing the medial caesura of the Alexandrine. " Your language has a greater quantity of inharmonious sounds, and a smaller of distinct words for rhyme than any other that employs it..... Many of the rhymes, indeed a great proportion of them, are formed by the termination of the tenses. Now surely no good writer would wish two similar tenses at equal distances. "[4] He calls rhyme " Boileau's goddess of necessity. "[5] " Your heroic line rises and falls at a certain pitch, like the handle of a pump. "[6] Closely connected with Landor's strictures on versification are his puerile prejudices against French pronunciation itself, for instance, against the " nasal twang, the most disagreeable and disgusting of sounds : being produced by the same means as a stink is rejected, and thus reminding us of one. "[7] Even French spelling is objected to, for example *eaux* " to express a sound which... all others would express by the simple

1. *Op. cit.*, v. IV, p. 107.
2. See Book IV, ch. IV.
3. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, p. 96.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

vowel o. "[1] He quotes the following verses, italicizing the similar sounds :

> Je vais *faire la guerre* aux habitans de l'*air*.
> Il me *faut* du *repos*, des *prés* et des *forêts*.
> Ont *cru* me rendre *affreux* aux *yeux* de l'*univers*.
> Ses écrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux *yeux*.

and comments : " The man must have been born in a sawmill, or in France, or under the falls of Niagara, whose ear can suffer these. "[2] Near the end of the dialogue Delille objects : " There are excellences, my friend, in Boileau, of which you cannot judge so correctly as a native can : for instance his versification ", and Landor replies : " I would not creep into the secrets of a versification upon which even you, M. Delille, can ring no changes; a machine which must be regularly wound up at every six syllables, and the construction of which is less artificial than that of a cuckoo-clock. "[3]

Boileau's lack of real poetical quality is closely associated with his indebtedness to the Roman satirists in Landor's criticism. " The satire we have dipped into is borrowed in many parts from Horace, in many from Juvenal ; yet Boileau has contrived to torpify with prose and puffing all the gaiety of the one, and to weaken with cold and hoarseness all the declamation of the other "[4]; and the indictment of Boileau closes with the following summing-up by Landor : " Take your Boileau. Some morning (when we are both of us quite at leisure) I will engage (if I have not done it already) to make out a full hundred of puerilities in your grave, concise, elegant poet. At present I have nothing more to say, than that he never elevates the mind, he never warms or agitates the heart, he inspires no magnanimity, no generosity, no tenderness. What, then, is he worth? A smile from Louis ! "[5]

This summary has inevitably omitted some incidental points in Landor's criticism. For instance, he deals some shrewd hits at Boileau's mythological frippery which was only too much imitated in England : " I must observe here, that Apollo, Parnassus, etc., are too frequently used by your poets, and that nothing shows

1. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, p. 114.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 130-131.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

barrenness of invention more evidently, than a perpetual recurrence to mythology on subjects unconnected with it." [1] Delille's objection that he "cannot well believe that if Boileau..... was a poet so faulty as you represent him, he would have escaped the censure of such sound critics and elegant writers as Johnson and Warton" is answered by the curt statement that "Johnson had no feeling for poetry; and Warton was often led astray by a feverish and weak enthusiasm." [2]

Landor's dialogue called forth two answers from Hazlitt. In the *Edinburgh Review* for March, 1824, he wrote as follows in a review of Landor's book: "Boileau, according to our critic, had not a particle of sense, wit, or taste; Pope, to be sure, was of a different opinion — and we take it to be just possible that Boileau would have thought himself indemnified by the homage of the one for the scorn of the other." [3] In another review (the date and place of which I have not discovered) he expatiates more freely. "The controversy between the Abbé Delille and our author in person, of which Boileau is the leading subject, is an amusing specimen of verbal criticism. All that it proves, however, is that this kind of criticism proves nothing but the acuteness of the writer, and also that those poets who pique themselves on being most exempt from it are the most liable to it. Pope is an example among ourselves. Those who are in the habit of attending to the smallest things do not see the farthest before them; and in polishing and correcting one line, they overlook and fall into some fresh mistake in another. The altering and retouching after a lapse of years, or during the probation of Horace's nine years, is sure to lead to inconsistency and partial oversights. Mr. Landor, in some instances, we imagine, confounds humour with blunders. Thus the truism in the line,

Que, si sous Adam même, et *loin avant Noé*,

we should consider as a mere piece of *naïveté* in the manner of La

1. *Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1876), v. IV, p. 103.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 121. In a letter to Miss Rose Paynter (dated from Bath, 1842). Landor has a kindlier reference to Boileau: "All delicate points in criticism are liable to be called *cavils*. But Boileau wisely says — *Rien n'est beau que le vrai* — and he says it of poetry." *Letters of W. S. Landor* (ed. by Stephen Wheeler), London, 1899.

3. *Op. cit.*, v. XI. See also *Works of Hazlitt* (Glover & Waller, ed.), v. 10, p. 231.

Fontaine. We will give up, however, without scruple, Boileau's mock-heroics as we would some English ones of later date. But his satire and his sense we cannot relinquish all at once, though he was a Frenchman, and, what is still worse, a Frenchman of the age of Louis XIV! It is hard that a people who arrogate all perfection to themselves should possess none; nor can we think that so vast and magnificent a reputation as their literature has acquired, could be raised, as Mr. Landor would persuade us, without either art or genius?" [1] Both these comments are in keeping with that generous but not very enthusiastic attitude towards French literature which characterized his utterances noted above.

A somewhat warmer note of championship is heard in the anonymous reviews which appeared in *The Westminster* and *The Quarterly*. *The Westminster Review* for April, 1824, speaks up for Boileau thus: "It may be useful to inquire with what degree of fairness Mr. Landor has conducted his remarks on two of the most distinguished ornaments of French literature, Voltaire and Boileau..... Poor Boileau is handled still more roughly. In examining the poetry of these models of French verse, Mr. Landor has applied a kind of logic which would annihilate all poetry whatever....[Examples are given of how Boileau is misrepresented by mistranslation.] Another method to which Mr. Landor has unsparingly resorted for the purpose of depreciating the French poets is not exactly mis-quotation, but a careful selection of the very worst passages in their works. We shall not follow him further in his criticisms." [2] It is, however, *The Quarterly Review* for January, 1824, which gives what is probably nearest the average judicial summing-up of Boileau's merits and defects that might have been expected at that moment of literary history. "In a conversation between the author and the Abbé Delille", runs this statement, "there is much minute criticism upon French poetry. On this occasion Mr. Landor, being manager as well as performer, takes care to allot the best part to himself, and the abbé cuts a very inconsiderable figure. Indeed it may be observed that wherever Mr. Landor is one of the interlocutors, the responses of the other have about the same proportion of vigour and sagacity that obtains in the more elementary dialogues between Tutor and Charles. The

1. *Op. cit.*, v. 10, p. 250.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. I, p. 447.

abbé, therefore, stands forth as the feeble prop of French poesy, in whom we can admire nothing but the weakness with which he endures the contemptuous attacks of his adversary; and in this game between the right hand and the left, it is amusing enough to observe the exultation of the winner. French poetry may be better defended, provided the right ground be taken; and in order to do this it is necessary at once and without reserve to relinquish the cause of all tragedies and heroics, of all sentimental and romantic poetry in the language. We should then come to the *sylvae* of the country, to the madrigals, epigrams, vers d'amour, baisers, and to the strongest point of defence, *the works of Boileau*[1], which Mr. Landor, with his usual ill fortune, has chosen as the main point of attack. Boileau is the most successful of French poets, because he chose those walks of poetry for which only the French language is fitted. He was the fair rival of Pope in all his writings except the Epistle to Eloisa; for from any poetry of an impassioned character the Frenchman judiciously forbore. It is not our design, for it is highly unnecessary, to support the reputation of Boileau against the criticisms of Mr. Landor. They tend to convince the incredulous that an author who published many volumes has written sundry bad lines and weak couplets. They also show that he did not employ a finer modulation of rhythm than his native language admitted. We know, somewhat better than Mr. Landor does, the incurable infirmities of French verse, and the spirit of pedantry by which the tragedians crippled it still further, substituting bad mechanism for natural disability. But we bring forward these facts in favour of Boileau, and not against him. With regard to the particular defect instanced, it is true that the French heroic is necessarily divided into two cadences, but it is not necessarily, nor indeed is it often, confined to those two. One line,

Soupire, étend les bras, ferme l'œil et s'endort,

may express four actions each by its respective movement, and one can scarcely read it without perceiving that it sounds as it ought. By some accident, however, Mr. Landor has come to a just conclusion upon the general subject, and the most unlearned adversary and the worst directed attack shall not tempt us to say a word in defence of French versification."[2]

1. The italics are in the original.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. XXX, p. 516.

And so the history of Boileau's reputation in England up to the close of the Romantic Period ends on no sensational note. Keats's eloquent scorn and Landor's vehement animus arouse no response, rather reprobation; yet the speakers for the defence are noticeably much less impassioned than the Walpoles and Mathiases of the preceding age. The fact is that the Romantic Age had "placed" Boileau at last. The pioneers of that age had been troubled by his presence; for he was a lion in their path. He frightened and angered them. But their successors, with the help of their contempt for the French language and metre, conjured away this apparition. The lion became just a good-sized French bull-dog whom one could afford to treat with good-natured patronage. "Boileau is the most successful of French poets because he chose those walks of poetry for which only the French language is fitted." Such was the modest little national niche into which the once universal leader of European literature was fitted when the ebbing tide of neo-classicism left him stranded on the shores of Romance.

BOOK II

TRANSLATIONS AND IMITATIONS OF BOILEAU'S WORKS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY : NEO-CLASSIC THEORIES OF TRANSLATION [1]

From the beginning of the Renaissance, when the rendering of the Greek and Latin masterpieces into the vernaculars imposed itself as one of the first duties of literary scholarship, the question of the proper ideal of translation became a much discussed one. The necessity for a choice between the methods of direct translation and general imitation was soon realized. When the Pléïade in France took the question up, it became coloured by their particular enthusiasms. Translation for them was not an attempt to interpret the past faithfully, but to convey into their own vernacular the riches of the ancient languages. [2] As this conception spread, less respect was paid to minute fidelity to the original; a theory of paraphrase, which, under cover of aiming at the author's real intention rather than his mere words, concerned itself really with the *nuances* of the French language, gradually developed. Perrot d'Ablancourt was the standard-bearer of this theory in the prefaces to his numerous translations of Greek and Latin authors. These translations were at once so free and so attractive that Guez de Balzac refers to them wittily as *les belles infidèles*. Cowley, in the preface to his *Pindarique Odes*, claims the credit of having introduced this method of translation into England. The manifesto of this school in England, however, is to be found in the verses of Denham prefixed to Fanshawe's version of the *Pastor Fido* (1647):

> That servile path thou nobly dost decline,
> Of tracing word by word and line by line....
> A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,
> To make Translations and Translators too;

1. For a fuller treatment of the theory of translation in the seventeenth century, see J. E. Spingarn: *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, v. I, Introduction; V. p. XLVIII-LVIII.

2. *Défense et Illustration de la langue française*, 1549, I, 5, 6.

They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,
True to his sense, but truer to his fame.

Dryden, in the *Preface to the Translation of Ovid's Epistles* (1680), reduces the methods of translation to three in the following passage: [1]

It remains that I should say somewhat of the Poetical Translations in general, and give my opinion (with submission to better judgments), which way of version seems to be the most proper.

All translation I suppose may be reduced to these three heads:

First, that of metaphrase, or turning an author word for word, and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace his Art of Poetry translated by Ben Jonson. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified but not altered. Such is Mr. Waller's translation of Virgil's Fourth *Aeneid*. The third way is that of imitation, where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original to run division on the ground-work, as he pleases. Such is Mr. Cowley's practice in turning two Odes of Pindar, and one of Horace into English.

Since a translation might then range from being a mere copy, in English, of its original to being practically an independent composition, it is clearly necessary to examine every translation to see what original treatment or original ideas, if any, have been introduced by the translator into the "ground-work" as Dryden calls it. Moreover, it is practically impossible to assign any given piece of translation of the period as a whole to any of the categories defined by Dryden. Most translations partake of the characteristics of all three. Parts of them may be metaphrase, others expand into paraphrase, only to lose their identity completely as imitation.

It should also be pointed out that in a period when the original was regarded rather as a theme on which the translator was to contrive his own embroideries, translation was much more a literary exercise and therefore susceptible of exerting an influence in the development of literary style and taste. The combination of close attention to one's author with the desire to even improve on him if possible while translating him would seem likely to result

1. Ker: *Dryden's Essays*, vol. I, p. 237.

in as close a fusion as possible of the spirit of the model and the imitator. In Spingarn's words[1]: "In an age in which judgment was valued more highly than fancy, translation seemed to have even higher claims than creative work:

> And by improving what was writ before,
> Invention labours less, but Judgment more."

The above considerations will, I hope, have demonstrated two things: first, the importance, in estimating the influence of a foreign author during the neo-classic period, of examining the English renderings of his works; second, the difficulty of distinguishing absolutely, during that period, between the two categories of translation and imitation. In the present book, which aims at reviewing all the English works which, in a greater or lesser degree, are inspired by Boileau, no attempt, therefore, will be made to treat "translations" and "imitations" in separate sections. The division into chapters will rather be determined by chronological considerations. We shall first review all the renderings made from Boileau during the Age of Dryden (which as in Book I will be taken to include the first decade of the eighteenth century); then a chapter will be devoted to the two outstanding men who did more than all their predecessors combined to naturalize the Boileau-type of poetry in England; the last section will rehearse with briefer comment the more or less perfunctory imitations which fill the long period between 1711 and 1830, when "every warbler had the tune by heart". The subdivisions within each chapter will follow (with the exception of Chapter III, where the chronological development of Pope's poetry will be the guiding principle) the natural classification of Boileau's works into (1) the *Satires*, *Epistles* and *Minor Works* (2), the *Art poétique* (3), the *Lutrin*. This seems, on the whole, the most convenient classification, though it involves the inconvenience of seeking Oldham's total work in Boileau-adaptation, for example, in three separate sub-divisions.

It should perhaps be made clear that among "translations and imitations" I include, besides complete poems, fragments of poems, couplets, single lines, even half lines and phrases, in which reminiscences of Boileau's phraseology can be detected. I am well aware that I am treading here on dangerous ground,

1. *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*: v. I, Introduction, p. LVI.

particularly dangerous insomuch as Boileau himself is such a close imitator of the classical satirists that his enemy, Cotin, scored a palpable hit when he said, parodying one of Boileau's lines:

J'appelle Horace Horace, et Boileau — traducteur.

But the general dangerousness of the ground I am venturing upon will not be over-emphasized by any one who realizes the difference between the modern and the neo-classic attitude towards plagiarism; and as for the particular danger in the case of Boileau, I believe that, even in cases where the idea or the phrase in question might have been taken from Horace, Juvenal or Persius, it is often quite possible to prove that it was, in fact, taken from Boileau.

CHAPTER II

DURING THE AGE OF DRYDEN

A. THE SATIRES, THE EPISTLES AND MINOR WORKS

Between the year of the Restoration and the publication of the complete translation of Boileau's works in 1711, several of Boileau's shorter works (satires, epistles, prefaces, etc.) were translated or adapted or imitated by English writers. None of the English renderings of this part of Boileau's work reached a high degree of excellence, but they are of some interest for the influence they may have exerted on the development of certain departments of English literature. As was pointed out above [1], the introducers of Boileau into England were the Court Poets ; they were essentially amateurs in poetry ; and though some of them could write well enough when they wished to, they had no artistic conscience to hold them up to a constant standard. Most of the other adapters of Boileau's shorter poems during this period shared to the full the amateurishness of their social superiors.

The chronology of the works of the minor English poets of the Restoration period has been by no means completely ascertained ; it is therefore impossible to be sure who was the first translator of Boileau into English. The first dated reference I can find, however, would seem to assign this honour to Sir George Etherege, " who " (according to a letter written by Dryden to the Earl of Rochester in July, 1673) " translating a satire of Boileau's and changing the French names into English, read it so often that it came to their ears who were concerned and forced him to leave off the design e'er it were half finished. Two of the verses I remember :

> I call a spade a spade ; Eaton [2] a bully ;
> Frampton a pimp ; and brother John a cully [3].

1. Book I, p. 3.
2. " Sir John Eaton was a noted writer of songs at the time ". (Scott's note).
3. Boileau, *Satire I*, 52 :
   " J'appelle un chat un chat, et Rolet un fripon ".

But one of his friends imagined those names not enough for the dignity of a satire and changed them thus:

> I called a spade a spade; and Dunbar a bully;
> Brounckard a pimp; and Aubrey Vere a cully." [1]

I can find no evidence that these verses of Etherege were ever published [2], but they have some interest as showing at an early period three tendencies which were later to become marked in English adaptations of Boileau, (1) the particular attraction for English writers of Boileau's combination of literary and personal satire, (2) the trick of "changing the French names into English", (3) the stylistic device of impaling the names of one's victims on the stressed syllables of the line.

The renderings by Rochester and Butler (both of whom died in 1680) are to be placed in the later seventies, while those by Oldham (who died in 1683) and Buckingham (who died in 1688) are to be placed in the early eighties. We have seen in Book I that Rochester was one of Boileau's most devoted admirers [3] and also that the former's *Satire upon Man* was, according to Rymer, "commonly taken to be a translation from Boileau." [4] This it certainly was not, even taking the word "translation" in its widest interpretation. Rymer himself was quite clear as to the distinction between Rochester's poem and Boileau's *Eighth Satire* [5]; but in the next century, Johnson said: "Of the *Satire against Man*, Rochester can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away." [6] With all respect to Johnson, "Boileau's part" does not seem to me to be a very great one. The *Eighth Satire* is just a *boutade*, the production of a professional satirist; it is conducted in a spirit of urbane banter. Rochester's poem is a sincere and bitter diatribe on the futility of the human reason; it is at once more poetical and more philosophical than Boileau's work, but infinitely less artistic. Its philosophical weight it probably got from Hobbes [7]; Rochester's only obligation to Boileau

1. *Dryden's Works* (Scott-Saintsbury ed.), v. XVIII, pp. 94-95.
2. They do not appear in A. W. Verity's edition of *Etherege's Works* (1888).
3. See p. 4.
4. See p. 8.
5. See p. 8.
6. *Lives of the Poets* (Rochester).
7. See Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, v. III, p. 465, also p. 466.

seems to be the suggestion of setting off the instinctive wisdom of the animals against man's so-called reason.[1] Yet this is sufficient to make the *Satire against Man* of interest in our quest; for it is in this respect the first of a series of works in English which, by borrowing this conception of Boileau's, show that it appealed in an extraordinary degree to his English contemporaries.[2]

Besides the *Satire against Man* there is a poem ascribed to Rochester, entitled *A Trial of the Poets for the Bays* (*In Imitation of a Satire of Boileau*). It has not been discovered why it has been called an imitation of Boileau. It bears not the slightest resemblance to anything Boileau has written. What it really appears to be is an adaptation to the literary conditions of Rochester's times of Suckling's *Sessions of the Poets*, which goes back for its original to Boccalini's *Ragguagli di Parnaso*.[3]

In the *Genuine Remains* of Samuel Butler we find a poem entitled *A Satire to a Bad Poet*, which turns out to be a very close translation of Boileau's *Second Satire*.[4] Does the title of Butler's poem imply that he really thought that Boileau meant to reproach Molière for his facility in rhyming? The name of Molière, however, does not occur in Butler's translation; nor does the name of the poet he had in mind, if such existed, appear anywhere. The following verses from the beginning and end of Butler's poem will give an idea of the quality of these early translations from Boileau, with their mediocre versification:

> Great famous wit! whose rich and easy vein,
> Free and unused to drudgery and pain,
> Has all Apollo's treasure at command,

1. For further comparison of the two poems, see *Cambridge History of English Literature*, v. VIII, pp. 242-3.

2. It may have been this poem that Leigh Hunt had in mind when he pictured "Rochester staggering home to pen a satire in the style of Monsieur Boileau". See *The Indicator*, chapter 63 ("My Books"). It should perhaps be noted that Mr. Percy L. Babington thinks that the *Satire against Man* should be ascribed to John Oldham. See *The Modern Language Review* for January, 1918.

3. See Longueville's *Rochester and other Literary Rakes of the Court of Charles II*, p. 280 (London, 1903). Suckling's poem is reprinted in Spingarn's *Critical Essays, etc.*, V, I, p. 190, and in the Introduction of the same work, pp. XXIII-XXX will be found a discussion of the poem and its relation to Boccalini.

4. The relation of this poem to Boileau has been pointed out in the *C. H. E. L.*, v. VIII, p. 70, note 7. The poem itself is to be found in *Chalmers' E. P.*, v. VIII, p. 205.

And how good verse is coined does understand ;
In all wit's combat master of defence !
Tell me, how dost thou pass on rhyme and sense ?
'Tis said they apply to thee, and in thy verse
Do freely range themselves as volunteers,
And without pain or pumping for a word,
Place themselves fitly of their own accord.
....
Teach me, for pity, how to make a rhyme ;
And, if the instruction chance to prove in vain,
Teach..... how ne'er to write again.

Among the works of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, is a poem entitled *Timon, a Satyr, in Imitation of Monsieur Boileau, upon several passages in some new plays then acted upon the stage.* This poem — which is a rather undignified performance — was evidently suggested by Boileau's Third Satire (commonly known as *Le Festin ridicule*), that masterpiece of *genre*-painting in verse, which from this time on was destined to be one of Boileau's most popular works in England. Whereas in Boileau the literary satire comes in naturally and in moderation near the end of the piece, — the description of the dinner being the main object of attention — Buckingham's piece is simply a string of couplets abusing contemporary writers with the background of the dinner sketched in here and there. The company represented at dinner is a good deal coarser than Boileau's and its portrait is drawn without reserve. The culinary descriptions, on the other hand, are much less detailed and realistic than Boileau's. The following extract will show what the average Court poet made out of Boileau. The first is the portrait of the host's wife (a character which does not appear in the original) :

I saw my error, but' twas then too late,
No means nor hopes appeared for a retreat :
Well, we salute, and each man takes his seat.
Boy, cries my sot, is my wife ready yet ?
A wife, good Gods ! A fop and bullies too !
For one poor meal what must I undergo ?
In comes my lady straight ; she had been fair,
Fit to give love and to prevent despair ;
But age, beauty's incurable disease,
Had left her more desire than power to please.
As cocks will strive although their spurs be gone,

She with her one blear eye to smite began
Tho' nothing else, she (in despair of time)
Preserved the affectation of her prime:
However you begun, she brought in love,
And hardly from that subject would remove.

The second shows the quality of the literary satire:

D—n me (says Dingboy) in my mind G—ds—nns,
Etheredge writes airy songs and soft lampoons,
The best of any man; as for your nouns,
Grammar and rules of art, he knows 'em not.
Yet writ two taking plays, without one plot.
Huff was for Settle and Morocca praised,
Said rumbling words, like drums, his courage raised,
.....
Kickum for Crowne declared, said in romance
He had outdone the very wits of France.

Inferior as this is to the original, and rough as it is in itself, it introduces a new note in English satire.

So far we have been dealing mainly with the very small fry of literature (even Butler, as a formal satirist, need not be excepted). We now come to the first important English poet who underwent the influence of Boileau. John Oldham would have shown clearer marks of that influence in his work if he had not died just as it began to operate. How busy he was with Boileau is shown by the fact that we shall meet him again in the two succeeding sections of this chapter. Oldham translated two of Boileau's Satires, the Fifth and the Eighth. These translations are among the best of these early ones, being marked by fidelity to the author's sense and a judicious freedom in rendering the latter's French into racy English. The verse, of course, has the roughness peculiar to Oldham. The Eighth Satire (which had already attracted Rochester) is "imitated", to use Oldham's own words, with a great deal of spirit and freedom, yet manages to keep everywhere close to the sense and general form of the original, as may be seen from the following extracts. It will be noted that Oldham continues the practice begun by Etherege and Buckingham of substituting English for French proper names.

Of all the creatures in the world that be,
Beast, fish or fowl that go or swim or fly
Throughout the globe from London to Japan

The arrant'st fool in my opinion's Man.
What? (straight I'm taken up) an ant, a fly,
A tiny mite, which we can hardly see
Without a perspective, a silly ass
Or freakish ape? Dare you affirm that these
Have greater sense than Man? Ay questionless. [1]

What would he say if he were condemned to stand
For one long hour in Fleetstreet or the Strand,
To cast his eyes upon the motley throng
The two-legged herd that daily pass along. [2]

Besides these translations [3] Oldham shows the influence of Boileau's satire in several of his poems. The *Satire dissuading from poetry* has as its central conception a dialogue between Oldham and the ghost of Spenser as to the utility of writing poetry, which corresponds to the dialogue between Boileau and his "Esprit" in the Ninth Satire, and the general idea in the following passage is paralleled in Boileau.

Perhaps, fond fool, thou sooth'st thyself in dream,
With hopes of purchasing a lasting name?
Thou think'st perhaps thy trifles shall remain
Like sacred Cowley and immortal Ben?
.....
But, grant thy poetry should find success,
And (which is rare) the squeamish critics please,
Admit it read and praised and courted be
By this nice age and all posterity. [4]

But there the resemblance ends. Boileau's poem is a triumphant and militant justification of his satirical mission, "a martyrology

1. Cf. Boileau, *Sat.*, VIII, vs. 1-8.
2. *Ibid.*, *Sat.*, VIII, 283-6.
3. These translations were reproduced in the 1711 translation of Boileau's *Complete Works*, v. I, pp. 185, 209, with certain modifications. See further, p. 186. For Oldham's translation of Satire V, see *C. H. E. L.*, v. VIII, p. 101.
4. Cf. Boileau, *Sat.*, IX, vs. 61-68:

Vous vous flattez, peut-être, en votre vanité,
D'aller comme un Horace à l'immortalité,
Et déjà vous croyez, dans vos rimes obscures,
Aux Somaizes futurs préparer des tortures.
.....
Mais je veux, que le sort, par un heureux caprice,
Fasse de vos écrits prospérer la malice.

of bad books and bad authors " (to quote M. Lanson), whereas Oldham's is a bitter, whining diatribe against an age that will praise but not pay its poets. Though the apostrophe to Spenser's ghost is, as Oldham surmises, above his " common rate and usual vein ", the greater part of the poem is spoiled by a coarseness which shows no influence of Boileau's taste.

Oldham's *Satire in Imitation of the Third of Juvenal* is the first adaptation of that famous poem in which the Roman satirist's strictures on Rome are transferred to corresponding aspects of modern London, in which English proper names are everywhere substituted for Roman ones. This important innovation Oldham unquestionably learned from Boileau's First and Sixth Satires in which Paris takes the place of Rome. (Oldham himself, as well as Etherege and Buckingham, had already substituted English names for the French ones in Boileau's original satires); but I doubt if his rendering of Juvenal is under any further indebtedness to Boileau. It seems to be a pretty close adaptation of its original, much closer than Boileau's is. In his *Letter from the Country to a Friend in Town, giving an Account of the Author's Inclination to Poetry*, Oldham seems to be indebted to Boileau's Second Satire for his general conception — a contrast between his friend's facility in writing verse with his own awkwardness and a description of his struggles to overcome the *cacoethes scribendi* — and for several passages in some detail. The satirical intention which Boileau knows how to introduce so cleverly in the midst of his own self-depreciation (vs. 32-52) — the ridicule of the *clichés* and padding like *à nulle autre seconde* and *non pareil* so popular with his contemporaries — is entirely absent in Oldham, whose poem is rather a self-centred study of the genesis of ideas in his own mind. Some of the passages in Oldham's poem whose indebtedness to Boileau is most evident follow:

> Verse the great boast of drudging fools, from some,
> Nay most of scribblers, with much straining come:
> .....
> Your pen uncalled they readily obey,
> And scorn your ink should flow as fast as they:
> Each strain of yours so easy does appear,
> Each such a graceful negligence does wear,
> As shews you have none, and yet want no care. [1]

1. Boileau, *Sat.*, II, vs. 1-10:

> Rare et fameux esprit, dont la fertile veine

The greatest curse I can I wish on him,
(If there be any greater than to rhyme),
Who first did of the lewd invention think,
First made two lines with sounds resembling clink,
And, swerving from the easy paths of prose,
Fetters and chains did on free sense impose.[1]

And thus resolved against the scribbling vein,
I deeply swear never to write again.[2]

Sometimes, after a tedious day half-spent,
When fancy long has hunted on cold scent,
Tired in the dull and fruitless chase of thought,
Despairing I grow weary and give out:
.....
But when I once begin to find again
Recruits of matter in my pregnant brain,
Again more eager I the haunts pursue,
And with fresh vigour the loved sport renew.[3]

Oldham's *Satire upon a printer that exposed him by printing a piece of his grossly mangled and faulty* breathes the spirit of Bolevian satire and has the following few verses, especially the last two, which are evidently directly suggested by lines in Boileau's Ninth Satire:

Ignore en écrivant le travail et la peine,
Pour qui tient Apollon tous ses trésors ouverts,
Et qui sais à quel coin se marquent les bons vers,
.....
Enseigne-moi, Molière, où tu trouves la rime.
On dirait, quand tu veux, qu'elle te vient chercher:
Jamais au bout du vers on ne te voit broncher,
Et sans qu'un long détour t'arrête ou t'embarrasse,
A peine as-tu parlé qu'elle-même s'y place.

1. *Cf. Sat.*, II, vs. 53-56:
Maudit soit le premier dont la verve insensée
Dans les bornes d'un vers renferma sa pensée,
Et, donnant à ses mots une étroite prison,
Voulut avec la rime enchaîner la raison!

2. *Ibid.*, vs. 25-26:
Et maudissant vingt fois le démon qui m'inspire,
Je fais mille serments de ne jamais écrire.

3. *Cf. Sat.*, II, vs. 23-32:
De rage, quelquefois, ne pouvant la trouver,
.....
J'attends de vers en vers qu'elle daigne venir.

Born to chastise the vices of the age,
Which pulpits dare not nor the very stage;
Sworn to lash knaves of all degrees, and spare
None of the kind, however great they are:
Satire's my only province and delight,
For whose dear sake alone I've vowed to write. [1]

The same author's *Counterpart to the Satire against Virtue* (or, as it is sometimes called, the *Ode on Virtue*) contains an indictment of human follies:

Whereby deposing reason from its gentle sway,
(That rightful sovereign which we should obey)
We undergo a various tyranny,
And to un-numbered servile passions homage pay [2].

which, in its general thought — as well as more specifically in the treatment of Avarice and Ambition [3] — recalls part of Boileau's Eighth Satire.

1. Cf. Boileau, *Sat.*, IX, vs. 279-83:

C'est elle qui, m'ouvrant le chemin qu'il faut suivre
M'inspira dès quinze ans la haine d'un sot livre
Et sur ce mont fameux, où j'osai la chercher
Fortifia mes pas et m'apprit à marcher;
C'est pour elle, en un mot, que j'ai fait vœu d'écrire.

2. Cf. Boileau, *Sat.*, VIII, vs. 65-68:

Ce maître prétendu qui leur donne des lois,
Ce roi des animaux, combien a-t-il de rois!
L'Ambition, l'Amour, l'Avarice, la Haine,
Tiennent comme un forçat son esprit à la chaîne.

3. Cf. Oldham:

Some, sordid avarice in vassalage confines,
Like Roman slaves condemned to the mines.
.....
Others, ambition, that imperious dame,
Exposes cruelly, like gladiators, here
Upon the world's great theatre.
Thro' dangers and thro' blood they wade to fame,
To purchase grinning honour and an empty name.

with Boileau (vs. 69-96):

Le sommeil sur ses yeux commence à s'épancher:
« Debout », dit l'Avarice, « il est temps de marcher.
..... »
Bientôt l'Ambition et toute son escorte
Dans le sein du repos vient le prendre à main forte,
L'envoie en furieux, au milieu des hasards,

I have dwelt on Oldham's indebtedness to Boileau's Satires at some length, both on account of the relative excellence of his renderings, and of his importance in the development of English satire. It will be noted that one of the things that impressed him most in Boileau was the latter's consciousness of his satirical mission. We shall return to this later; for the present we must glance at some of the minor satirists of the late seventeenth century, who were more or less followers of Dryden or Oldham, though these need not detain us very long.

Robert Gould, one of the most thoroughly forgotten of this band, shows the influence of Boileau in his *Epistle to my Lord of Abingdon at his Country House*, which contains reminiscences of several of Boileau's poems, notably the following lines:

> Howe'er that term by fops is understood,
> 'Twas Virtue first that did distinguish blood.
> What signifies it tho' one boast he brings
> His pedigree from conquerors and kings;
> If by ill actions he debase his birth,
> And grow the public scorn, or public mirth?[1]

and in his *Satyr against Man*, which no doubt owes something to Rochester, but the following passages of which recall Boileau's Eighth Satire pretty unmistakably:

> Se faire estropier sur les pas des Césars,
> Et, cherchant sur la brèche une mort indiscrète,
> De sa folle valeur embellir la gazette.

The 4th line of the first stanza of Oldham's *Paraphrase upon Horace* (*Bk. II, Ode XIV*),

> Lo! while I speak, the present minute's gone,

is not in the original Latin, and recalls Boileau's

> Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi.

1. *Works of Mr. Robert Gould* (1709 ed), v. I, p. 125 ff.

Cf. Boileau, *Sat.*, V, vs. 1-8:

> La Noblesse, Dangeau, n'est pas une chimère
> Quand, sous l'étroite loi d'une vertu sévère,
> Un homme, issu d'un sang fécond en demi-dieux,
> Suit comme toi la trace où marchaient ses aïeux.
> Mais je ne puis souffrir qu'un fat, dont la mollesse
> N'a rien pour s'appuyer qu'une vaine noblesse,
> Se pare insolemment du mérite d'autrui,
> Et me vante un honneur qui ne vient pas de lui.

Juvenal had treated the same theme in his Satire VIII, but I think Gould's source is Boileau. He says: "The Greek and Latin poets being, in their original tongues, wholly unknown to me". Preface to 1689 edition of his Poems.

Man is my theme, — but where shall I begin,
Where enter the vast circle of his sin?
Or how shall I get out when once I'm in?
Man, who by Heav'n was made to govern all,
But how unfit demonstrates in his fall:
Created pure, and with a strength endued
Of grace divine, sufficient to have stood;
.....
What beast beside can we so slavish call
As man? who yet pretends he's lord of all.
Who ever saw (and all their classes cull)
A dog so snarlish, or a swine so full,
A wolf so rav'nous, or an ass so dull?
.....
Slave to his passions, every several lust
Whisks him about as whirlwinds do the dust.

Better if yet we wild in woods did roam,
Made some cool shades, or silent cave our home,
Than growing by society refined,
Disgrace burlesque, and ridicule our kind.

Why should vain man, they cry, the greatest beast,
Believe his essence nobler than the rest?
What tho' he high as Heaven erect can view?
So, when he pleases, can a monkey too;
.....
Search all the savage kind, both bulls and bears
And find me one perplexed with future fears.
If in some things (tho' 'tis but oft pretence)
We have th'advantage, cloathing and defence,
They yet exceed mankind in every sense:
This common fate, at least, to both is known,
We propagate our species and are gone.[1]

The poem, as a whole, differs from Boileau's satire in being rather a denunciation of moral perversity than of human reason.

1. *Works of Mr. Robert Gould*, 1709 ed., v. II, pp. 149, 171-173. Consult Boileau's *Satire* VIII, passim; Gould has not imitated particular lines or passages, but has absorbed the spirit of the whole. My quotations are from the 1709 edition of his works in two volumes; in the one-volume edition of 1689, the poem is much shorter and some of the passages I have quoted do not occur. See A. O. Lovejoy, "Pride in Eighteenth-Century Thought" (*Modern Language Notes*, January, 1921) for an interesting reference to this poem of Gould's in relation to eighteenth-century thought.

In a volume entitled *Miscellany Poems* published in 1697 appear translations by John Dennis of three works of Boileau — the Fourth Satire, part of the Fifth Epistle and his speech on the occasion of his admission to the French Academy. The translation of Boileau's *discours de réception* is a faithful piece of journeyman-work and calls for no comment. Nor need we pause on the rendering of the Fifth Epistle, which only goes as far as line 58 of the original. The translation of the Fourth Satire is very free, and is characteristic of the " expansions " which translators of the time made their originals undergo. Boileau's eight lines on the " galant " become in Dennis eighteen on the " beau ",

> But the old beau and every modish ass
> Who half the morning constantly does pass
> Ogling his ugly carcass in his glass :
> Which frightfully to adorn three hours are spent,
> As if, like ancient Picts, 'twere his intent
> To native ugliness acquired to impart
> And hideous grow by ornament and art :
> Who to the park or plays rides jingling, where
> By his loud nauseous chat and graceless air,
> He plagues the sensible and frights the fair,
> Whilst all the little loves that hover nigh
> Our English beauties from the scare-crow fly ;
> This chariot-load of blockhead hates all science,
> And bids to all the learned world defiance,
> Damns as by privilege whatever's writ,
> And makes his ignorance his claim to wit. [1]

Dennis also translated the " Epitaph writ by Boileau for his Mother's Tombstone " in *The Muses' Mercury* for April, 1707. [2]

1. *Cf. Sat.* IV, vs. 11-18 :

> D'autre part un galant, de qui tout le métier
> Est de courir le jour de quartier en quartier,
> Et d'aller, à l'abri d'une perruque blonde,
> De ses froides douceurs fatiguer tout le monde,
> Condamne la science, et blâmant tout écrit,
> Croit qu'en lui l'ignorance est un titre d'esprit,
> Que c'est des gens de cour le plus beau privilège,
> Et renvoie un savant dans le fond d'un collège.

Dennis translates certain lines of the Fourth Satire, which are only found in editions prior to 1683 (See Amar ed. of the *Œuvres*, v. I, p. 101). This may possibly indicate that the translation was made before that date.

2. See Paul, *John Dennis*, p. 216.

The *Posthumous Works of William Wycherley* contain a rather crude poem called *The Bill of Fare*, in which the feast and the literary satire are suggested by Boileau's Third Satire or by Buckingham's rendering of it [1], but which is not, as a whole, a translation or even an imitation of it. The following is a specimen:

> The while the board's in loose, disjointed chat,
> Discanted some on this thing, some on that;
> The knight whose sense was drowned in wine, thought fit
> To rail at men of sense to show his wit;
> Declared those bards whom all true wits call masters,
> Were wretched rhymers and dull poetasters,
> Said Donne and Cowley but ill poets were,
> And, tho' they had some brains, yet had no ear,
> Compared De Foe's burlesque with Dryden's satire,
> And Butler with the Lutrin's dull translator [2]:
> Decried each past to raise each present writer,
> And cursed the Fox, while he cried up the Biter.

John Hughes translated part of Boileau's *First Epistle* (*au Roi*, 1669), (vs. 61-86). [3] Stepney, in his "translation" of Juvenal's *Eighth Satire*, uses, in his chief attempts at localization, the same examples that Oldham had used in his imitation of Boileau's adaptation of this satire (the *Fifth Satire* of Boileau); this poem may, therefore, be regarded as having undergone at least an indirect Bolevian influence. [4] A poem doubtfully ascribed to Lord Somers, *Dryden's Satire to his Muse*, is indebted to Boileau's *Ninth Satire* for the device of Dryden criticizing his Muse for having inspired him with so much malice and wickedness. [5] Walter Harte translated Boileau's *Discours sur la Satire*. *A Ternary of Satires*, published anonymously, 1679, contains a translation of Boileau's *Eighth Satire* which is almost literal, no attempt being made even

1. See above, p. 116.

2. In the Table of Contents after "The Bill of Fare" is this note. — "In the close of this poem, 'By... the Lutrin's dull translator', Mr. Crowne is the person struck at, who formerly made a wretched version of that fine piece". We shall make the acquaintance of this translation presently.

3. Reprinted in *Chalmers' E. P.*, v. X, p. 53.

4. Reprinted in *Chalmers' E. P.*, v. VIII, p. 356.

5. See V. E. Jones' Harvard Thesis on English Satire, also Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors (ed. Park, 1806); where the poem is stated to be "printed in the 3rd vol. of Cogan's edition of the Minor Poets". I have not seen it.

to Anglicize the place-names.[1] In a *Miscellany of Poems*, published in 1685, appears (on p. 212) a mediocre translation by " a lady of quality " of Boileau's version of Sappho's *Ode*. In a *Miscellany of Original Poems*, published in 1701, is a rather free translation of the *Fourth Satire* of Boileau to Mr. W. R. In an *Examen Miscellaneum*, published in 1702, appears a translation of Boileau's Epigram to Perrault (" Ton oncle, dis-tu, l'assassin &c. "). Congreve's *Epistle to Temple* (Of Pleasing) may be indebted to parts of Boileau's *Epitre IX*.[2]

This completes the list of the authenticated versions of Boileau's shorter works into English which were produced before 1711. But, before closing this sub-chapter, it seems to be in place to call attention to the interesting problem raised by the following entry, under date of February, 1684, and under the classification " Miscellanies ", in the " Catalogue of Books Printed and Published at London, in Hillary Term (1683-84) ", contained in Arber's reprint of *The Term Catalogues* (II, 62) : " The Infernal Observator, or the Quickening Dead. In a dialogue written lately in French by Mr. Boileau, and now made into English. Octavo. Sold by B. Tooke at the Ship in St. Paul's Churchyard ; W. Davis in Amen Corner ; and Mr. Beaulieu in Duke's Court, against St. Martin's Church. " Whether this book is extant or not I do not know ; I have not been able to find a copy of it. What is the " dialogue written lately in French by Mr. Boileau " ? If " Mr. Boileau " is the author of the *Art poétique*, the dialogue may be one of three things — a work that has not come down to us, or the *Fragment d'un Dialogue contre les Modernes qui font des vers latins*, or the *Dialogue des Morts* (the name given to the pirated editions of the work known in its authoritative form as *Les Héros de Roman*). Boileau had composed both of these prior to 1674, but it does not appear that any one except Brossette had any knowledge of the *Fragment* ; Boileau did not even write it down[3] ; besides, the title of the English translation does not correspond with the subject-matter of the *Fragment*. As to the *Dialogue des Morts*, he

1. The full title of the work is *A Ternary of Satires containing* (1) *A satire against Man*, (2) *A satire against woman*, (3) *A satire against the Popish clergy, composed in French by an exquisite Pen, and now done into English*. The implication seems to be that all are by the same author, but the second and third are *not* by Boileau.

2. *Chalmers' E. P.*, v. X, p. 299.

3. See Gidel's ed. of Boileau, v. III, p. 235, note.

composed it in 1664-65, and recited it to friends; but, as far as I know, it has always been accepted by scholars that its first (unauthorized) appearance in print was in the second volume of the collection known as *Le Retour des Pièces choisies ou Bigarrures curieuses*, published at Emmerich in Rhenish Prussia in 1688.[1] Does the entry in *The Term Catalogues* suggest that there was an earlier pirated edition of this dialogue in French, unknown to scholars? Or can sufficient emphasis be placed on the word "written" in the phrase "a dialogue written lately in French" to justify the belief that this English translation was made from the French manuscript of some one who heard Boileau recite the piece and copied it down? Our only alternative is to believe that there was another Boileau, contemporary with the great one (and well enough known to the English public to need no distinguishing Christian name), who wrote at almost the same time a dialogue of which the subject-matter and title must — in order to justify the title of the English translation — have been singularly like those of Despréaux's work. It would be rather piquant if Boileau's work had first attained the dignity of type in the English language.

B. THE ART POÉTIQUE

The handful of English critical essays in verse — inspired more or less by Boileau's *Art poétique* — which appeared between 1680 and 1685, are more important, not only as artistic productions, but for their significance as symptoms and for their immediate influence, than all the poems reviewed in the preceding sub-chapter.

The first of these in actual composition, usually known as Soame's *Art of Poetry*, is, as a matter of fact, the joint work of Sir William Soame and John Dryden. This we know upon the authority of the following advertisement by Dryden's well-known publisher, Jacob Tonson: "This translation of Monsieur Boileau's Art of Poetry was made in the year 1680 by Sir William Soame of Suffolk, Baronet; who, being very intimately acquainted with Mr. Dryden, desired his revisal of it. I saw the manuscript lie in Mr. Dryden's hands for above six months, who made very consid-

1. See Crane's ed. of the *Héros de Roman*, Boston, 1902, p. 37.

erable alterations in it, particularly the beginning of the Fourth Canto; and it being his opinion that it would be better to apply the poem to English writers than keep to the French names, as it was first translated, Sir William desired he would take the pains to make that alteration; and accordingly that was entirely done by Mr. Dryden." [1] Scott, in his edition of Dryden, adds: "To give weight to Tonson's authority, it may be added that a great part of the poem bears marks of Dryden's polishing hand, and that some entire passages show at once his taste in criticism, principles and prejudices." [2] Scott, unfortunately, does not specify these passages [3]; but the important point about Dryden's collaboration is that he, by following the practice initiated by Etherege, Buckingham, and Oldham, of finding English analogues for the French individualities in Boileau's poem, transformed Boileau's masterpiece into an English *Art of Poetry*. As such it had a wide popularity and influence during the next thirty years; a second edition of it, with slight alterations, appeared in 1710.

This translation — probably owing to Dryden's part in it — is, on the whole, an excellent one. Its verse is usually smooth, and it represents the original so faithfully (apart from the passages adapted to English conditions) that it would probaby be classed by Dryden himself as a "metaphrase"; there is almost no padding in it, its length being approximately the same as that of the original. The intention of the translators to produce an English "poetic" is shown by the omission of passages irrelevant to English literary conditions, such as verses 105-108 of Canto I, where hiatus, enjambment, etc., are discussed. A curious liberty is taken with verses 21-26 of Canto I, which refer to Saint-Amant and his *Moïse sauvé* in the original, though he is not mentioned by name; the translators, instead of finding an English analogue, adopt another French one, Dubartas, whom they explicitly name and to whom they apply the rest of Boileau's passage without change, thus:

> Thus in past times Dubartas vainly writ,
> Alloying sacred truth with trifling wit,
> Impertinently and without delight,

1. Scott-Saintsbury ed. of Dryden's *Works*, v. XV, p. 223.
2. *Ibid.*, v. XV, p. 223.
3. It goes without saying that the passages in which names of English writers occur will be among those with which Dryden did the most tinkering.

Described the Israelites' triumphant flight,
And, following Moses o'er the sandy plain,
Perished with Pharaoh in the Arabian main. [1]

Did the translators really think that Boileau's reference was to Dubartas? Or did they consider that Sylvester's famous version of *Les Semaines* had made Dubartas almost English property? This is the only case where the name of a French writer appears in the version.

An interesting divergence from the spirit of the original is to be found in the passage relating to burlesque poetry, where Boileau's point is either missed, or — which is far more probable — purposely distorted. The sincerest desire to add the last refinements to English verse could not wean Englishmen from their admiration for Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, which knew no bounds in England at this time. Throughout this whole period, indeed, is evident the desire to make the best of two worlds, to admire the racy native authors and at the same time to import the French classical polish. Now there is really no transaction possible between burlesque and the classical code, as burlesque excludes the idea of decorum or nobility of style; and I hope to show later that Boileau undoubtedly exercised a real influence in substituting mock-heroic for burlesque in England by the early years of the eighteenth century. But his influence had not yet gone so deep at the time of the publication of Soame's translation. So we have Boileau's lines:

Imitons de Marot l'élégant badinage,
Et laissons le burlesque aux plaisants du Pont Neuf [2],

replaced by the absurdly pointless parallel:

But learn from Butler the buffooning grace,
And let burlesque in ballads be employed.

Nothing in reality could be farther from Marot's "élégant badinage" than the "buffooning grace" of Butler.

1. Cf. Boileau:

Ainsi tel autrefois qu'on vit avec Faret
Charbonner de ses vers les murs d'un cabaret,
S'en va mal à propos, d'une voix insolente
Chanter du peuple hébreu la fuite triomphante,
Et poursuivant Moïse au travers des déserts,
Court avec Pharaon se noyer dans les mers.

2. *Art poétique*, I, vs. 96-97.

The whole question of the legitimacy of burlesque as a literary genre was one of the most widely discussed in the critical literature of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and it was these half-dozen lines of Boileau that gave the impetus to the whole controversy.

The general character of the translation, and particularly the way in which Boileau's observations on French literature are adapted to English conditions, may be illustrated by quoting in full the notable passage on the history of recent English poetry. [1]

> Fairfax was he, who in that darker age
> By his just rules restrained poetic rage;
> Spenser did next in pastoral excel,
> And taught the noble art of writing well.
> To stricter rules the stanza did restrain
> And found for poetry a richer vein.
> Then Davenant came, who with a new-found art,
> Changed all, spoiled all, and had his way apart;
> His haughty muse all others did despise,
> And thought in triumph to bear off the prize,
> Till the sharp-sighted critics of the times
> In their Mock Gondibert exposed his rimes.
> .....
> This headstrong author, falling from on high,
> Made following authors take less liberty.
> Waller came last, but was the first whose art
> Just weight and measure did to verse impart,
> That of a well-placed word could teach the force
> And showed for poetry a nobler course.
> His happy genius did our tongue refine
> And easy words with pleasing numbers join;
> His verses to good method did apply
> And changed hard discord to soft harmony [2].

1. Cf. Deloporte, in his *Commentaire sur l'Art poétique*, v. I, p. 94 ff.: "Ce qu'il y a de plus intéressant pour nous dans la traduction de Soame et Dryden, c'est le remplacement des noms propres français par des noms propres anglais. Cette métamorphose, opérée par Dryden, constitue, selon nous, une vraie curiosité littéraire..... l'*Art poétique* français approprié, presque au lendemain de son apparition, à l'usage de la littérature anglaise, n'est-ce pas un fait unique dans les fastes du Parnasse?"

2. *A. P.*, I, 117 ff.:

> Villon sut le premier, dans ces siècles grossiers,
> Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers;
> Marot bientôt après fit fleurir les ballades,

It is noteworthy that the translation displays a sound knowledge of English literary history and of the contributions made to it by the various poets mentioned, in striking contrast to Boileau's obscure and inaccurate account of the development of French poetry. Fairfax is not the English analogue of the historical Villon; but he does correspond to the imaginary Villon of Boileau. We shall see that in a later adaptation of Soame's version, an attempt is made to find more exact equivalents for the French names from the historical point of view; whereby the deeper significance of the passage is lost.

The history of Waller's reputation has never been thoroughly investigated. The extraordinarily high position in the evolution of English poetry which is given him in the passage just quoted was not necessarily dictated to the translator by the necessity of finding an English parallel to Malherbe. Dryden (who almost certainly wrote the lines on Waller) had already, in 1664, in the course of a discussion on rhyme in *The Epistle Dedicatory of the Rival Ladies*, said: "But the excellence and dignity of it [i. e. of rhyme] were never fully known till Mr Waller taught it; he first made writing easily an art; first showed us to conclude the sense most commonly in distichs, which, in the verse of those before him, runs on for so many lines together, that the reader is out of breath to overtake it, etc."[1]; and he had held Waller up as a

Tourna des triolets, rima des mascarades.
A des refrains réglés asservit les rondeaux,
Et montra pour rimer des chemins tout nouveaux.
Ronsard, qui le suivit par une autre méthode,
Réglant tout, brouilla tout, fit un art à sa mode,
Et toutefois longtemps eut un heureux destin;
Mais sa muse en français parlant grec et latin,
Vit dans l'âge suivant, par un retour grotesque,
Tomber de ses grands mots le faste pédantesque.
Ce poète orgueilleux, trébuché de si haut,
Rendit plus retenus Desportes et Bertaut.
Enfin Malherbe vint, et, le premier en France,
Fit sentir dans les vers une juste cadence,
D'un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir
Et réduisit la muse aux règles du devoir.
Par ce sage écrivain la langue réparée
N'offrit plus rien de rude à l'oreille épurée;
Les stances avec grâce apprirent à tomber,
Et le vers sur le vers n'osa plus enjamber.

1. Cf. *Dryden's Essays*, ed. Ker, v. I, p. 7.

model of " even, sweet and flowing " verse in *The Essay of Dramatic Poesy* in 1668.[1] But the above verses are stronger than anything that had ever yet been said in praise of Waller, and one cannot but think that their imperious finality had a good deal to do with establishing him in that exaggerated rank which he undoubtedly held at the end of that century and far on into the next one. Only seven years after the publication of Soame's translation, Atterbury (afterwards Bishop of Rochester) writes of Waller in words which seem, in part, nothing but a paraphrase of the verses quoted above: " Mr. Waller was indeed the parent of English verse, and the first which showed us our tongue had numbers and beauty in it. Our language owes more to him than the French does to Cardinal Richelieu and the whole Academy..... the tongue came into his hands like a rough diamond; he polished it first and to that degree that all artists since him have admired the workmanship without pretending to mend it... He undoubtedly stands first in the list of refiners and, for aught I know, the last too; for I question whether, in Charles II's reign, English did not come to its full perfection, and whether it has not had its Augustan age as well as the Latin. "[2] In the first number of the twelfth volume of *The Athenian Mercury*, a correspondent asks what poetry that journal recommends for young people to read; the answer is a long list of seventeenth-century poets in which Waller's name alone is printed in large capitals. This reputation, once established, extended far into the eighteenth century; in the *Biographia Literaria*, published in 1766, Waller is called " the most celebrated lyric poet that England ever produced ". Now, if my surmise is well-founded that Dryden's lines are largely responsible for the final fixing of Waller's reputation, we have the rather striking phenomenon of the exigencies of translation offering the translator an opportunity to re-adjust the whole scale of values in his native literature in conformity with foreign criteria. The neoclassical cause in poetry took a tremendous leap forward when the classicism of Waller was presented as the consummation of the whole development of English poetry. And it all happened because Boileau wrote " Enfin Malherbe vint ".

The passages in which Dryden avails himself with zest of his

1. Cf. *Dryden's Essays*, ed. Ker, v. I, p. 35.

2. See the Preface to the first edition of Waller's *Posthumous Poems* (1690). The passage is quoted by Gosse in his *From Shakespeare to Pope* pp. 248-249.

double privilege as translator and adapter to pillory his literary enemies constitute Soame's *Art of Poetry* the first effective example of that type of literary-critical-personal satire which Boileau had founded and which some of his English adapters, examined in the last sub-chapter, had made clumsy attempts to imitate, though it was destined to wait for Pope for its final consummation in England. But the names of Shadwell and Settle, "placés comme en leur niche", show that Dryden had already learned Boileau's trick.

> And Shadwell's works are printed but not sold. [1]
>
> Nor imitate the Settles of our times,
> Those tuneful readers of their own dull rimes,
> Who seize on all the acquaintance they can meet,
> And stop the passengers that walk the street. [2]
>
> Yet sometimes we have seen that wine or chance
> Has warmed cold brains and given dull writers mettle
> And furnished out a scene for Mr. Settle. [3]

The work known as Soame's *Art of Poetry*, then, is not merely a competent translation of Boileau's *Art poétique*, but is an important document in the history of English criticism and English satire.

While Soame and Dryden were perfecting their joint translation, some other critical treatises in verse were appearing in England, which owed more or less to Boileau's *Art poétique*. Among these are to be counted the two notable translations of Horace's *Ars Poetica* by Roscommon and Oldham. I include that of Roscommon (1680?) because, though no ideas or phrases are borrowed from Boileau in the translation, Roscommon shows in his Preface that his main concern is "to lay down such rules, as, if they be observed, will

1. Cf. Boileau, *Art poétique*, ch. IV, vs. 48:
   Et Gombaud, tant loué, garde encore la boutique.
2. *Ibid.*, ch. IV, vs. 53-56:
   Gardez-vous d'imiter ce rimeur furieux
   Qui, de ses vains écrits lecteur harmonieux,
   Aborde en récitant quiconque le salue
   Et poursuit de ses vers les passants dans la rue.
3. *Ibid.*, ch. II, vs. 192-195:
   Mais pourtant on a vu le vin et le hasard
   Inspirer quelquefois une muse grossière
   Et fournir, sans génie, un couplet à Linière.

make men write more correctly, and judge more discreetly ", at the same time that he deprecates the literalness of Ben Jonson's translation which rendered him, Roscommon says, unintelligible; and I think that this sense of the practical utility of Horace's rules to the times and the resultant desire to be clear rather than close in translation shew the influence of Boileau's example in adapting the *Ars Poetica* to the needs of his time in France.

There is more, however, to be said of Oldham's translation, which, since he died in 1683 and speaks in the Preface to his *Poems and Translations* of Roscommon's translation as preceding his, must have been written between 1680 and 1683. The great feature of this translation, of course, is that it is the first in which Horace's *Ars Poetica* is adapted to English conditions, the names of English poets replacing Latin ones and London taking the place of Rome; or, as Oldham himself tells us, " I fell to thinking of some course whereby I might serve myself of the advantages which those who went before me have either not minded or scrupulously abridged themselves of. This I soon imagined was to be effected by putting Horace into a more modern dress than hitherto he has appeared in, that is, by making him speak as if he were living and writing now. I therefore resolved to alter the scene from Rome to London, and to make use of English names of men, places and customs, where the parallel would decently permit, which I conceived would give a kind of new air to the poem, and render it more agreeable to the relish of the present age. " Now we have seen in previous sections of this study (and will see again in later ones), that Oldham at this time was a close student of Boileau, a translator and adapter of his satires. There seems, therefore, to be little doubt that the idea of modernizing Horace at the same time as he translated his didactic substance came to him from his study of the *Art poétique*, which, in many parts, is merely an adaptation of Horace to modern French conditions. It is a striking coincidence (for it is hardly likely that either knew of the other's work) that, at the very same moment, Dryden and Oldham should have been engaged in transforming, by this new method of finding English analogues for the foreign proper names, the one Boileau's *Art poétique*, and the other Horace's *Ars Poetica*, into thoroughly English Arts of Poetry.

This indebtedness to Boileau is borne out by certain passages and phrases which seem to be reminiscent of that author rather than of Horace. The translation of the Horatian :

Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni,

is followed by a line:

Shocks *reason* and the rules of *common sense*,

which has no original in the *Ars Poetica*, but which certainly uses Boileau's constantly-recurring watch-words. Again, the important line,

Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons.

is thus translated by Oldham:

Good sense must be the certain standard still
To all that will pretend to writing well,

which is not just the same thing as Jonson's:

The very root of writing well and spring
Is to be wise,

and indeed Horace seems to imply by *sapere*, if we are to judge by his context[1], rather the profound generalizing power which comes from study than the "bon sens" of the man of the world. Surely Boileau has suggested the new *nuance*.[2]

The lines on elegy:

Soft elegy, designed for grief and tears,
Was first designed to grace some mournful hearse;
Since to a brisker note 'tis taught to move,
And clothes our gayest passions, joy and love,

and also those on the Ode:

Gods, heroes, warriors and the lofty praise
Of peaceful conquerors in Pisa's race,
The mirth and joys which love and wine produce,

1. The next line is:

Rem tibi Socraticae poterunt ostendere chartae.

2. Perhaps Roscommon's "sound judgment is the ground of writing well" has a similar debt. Shaftesbury, in *Advice to an Author* (*Characteristics*, I, 3, p. 192 ff.) quotes Horace's "scribendi recte, etc." and comments on it in such a way as to show that *sapere* apparently was taken to mean philosophical knowledge rather than good sense.

With other wanton sallies of a muse,
The stately ode does for its subjects choose,

seem to re-echo certain words and phrases of Boileau :

D'un ton un peu plus haut, mais pourtant sans audace,
La plaintive élégie, en longs habits de deuil,
Sait, les cheveux épars, gémir sur un cercueil,
Elle peint des amants la joie et la tristesse.

L'ode avec plus d'éclat, et non moins d'énergie,
Élevant jusqu'au ciel son vol ambitieux,
Entretient dans ses vers commerce avec les dieux,
Aux athlètes dans Pise elle ouvre la barrière.

I am less sure about my next instance, but I think Oldham's rendering of the Horatian :

mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non di, non concessere columnae,

at comparative length :

But verse alone does of no mean admit,
Who'er will please, must please us to the height :
He must a Cowley or a Flecknoe be ;
For there's no second rate in poetry :
A dull insipid writer none can bear,
In every place he is the public jeer,
And lumber of the shops and stationer,

is indebted to Boileau's expansion of the same passage :

Mais dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire,
Il n'est point de degrés du médiocre au pire ;
Qui dit froid écrivain dit détestable auteur.
Boyer est à Pinchêne égal pour le lecteur ;
Qui ne lit guère plus Rampale et Mesnardière
Que Magnon, Du Souhait, Corbin et La Morlière.

A much closer indebtedness to the *Art Poétique*, however, is to be found in two treatises in verse on poetics written by two Court poets, the *Essay upon Poetry*, by John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave (1632), and the *Essay on Translated Verse* by Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (published in 1684).

Though Mulgrave implies in vs. 21-22 that Horace is his " master and exemplar ", the fact is that his work is modelled, with

reductions in scale, on the *Art Poétique*.[1] It begins, like the latter, with general remarks on the necessity of genius and judgment, and proceeds to a systematic discussion of the various kinds of poetry, first the minor *genres*, songs, elegy, odes, satire; then the major tragedy and epic, exactly as Boileau does, and in the same order, though Boileau describes some types which Mulgrave omits. Individual passages on the different *genres* are, moreover, often to be traced to Boileau. Thus, of the *Song*:

> Without his song no fop is to be found,
> A most offensive weapon which he draws
> On all he meets, against Apollo's laws:
> Though nothing seems more easy, yet no part
> Of poetry requires a nicer art
> .....
> So songs should be to just perfection wrought.

Cf. with Boileau's *Art Poétique*, II, 191-194:

> Il faut, même en chanson, du bon sens et de l'art.
> Mais pourtant on a vu le vin et le hasard
> Inspirer quelquefois une muse grossière
> Et fournir, sans génie, un couplet à Linière.

Or of the *Ode*:

> A higher flight and of a happier force,
> Are Odes, the muse's most unruly horse,
> That bounds so fierce the rider has no rest,
> But foams at mouth, and speaks like one possest.
> The poet here must be indeed inspired,
> And not with fancy, but with fury fired.
> Cowley might boast to have performed this part,
> Had he with Nature joined the rules of art.

Cf. with *A. P.*, II, 58-81:

> L'ode, avec plus d'éclat, et non moins d'énergie,
> Élevant jusqu'au ciel son vol ambitieux,

1. Cf. J. Warton's *Essay on Pope* (I, 191): "(Mulgrave) in his *Essay* (on *Poetry*) .....has followed the method of Boileau in discoursing on the various species of poetry in their different gradations to no other purpose than to manifest his own inferiority". Also, cf. Wolseley: Preface to *Valentinian* (1685), where he says of Mulgrave's *Essay*: "It would have been to no purpose then [i. e., during Rochester's life] to pick up scraps of Bossu, Rapin, Boileau, Mr. Dryden's prefaces and table-talk (for every one of these have a large share in his essay) and send 'em into the world for a new *Art of Poetry*".

Entretient dans ses vers commerce avec les dieux.
.....
Chez elle un beau désordre est un effet de l'art,
.....
Loin ces rimeurs craintifs dont l'esprit flegmatique,
Garde dans ses fureurs un ordre didactique.

The lines on tragedy:

Reject that vulgar error which appears
So fair of making perfect characters
.....
Some faults must be that his misfortune drew,
But such as may deserve compassion too,

recall *A. P.*, III, 104 ff.:

Des héros de roman fuyez les petitesses;
Toutefois aux grands cœurs donnez quelques faiblesses, etc.

And it is just possible that there may be some connection between the lines:

Expose no single fop, but lay the load
More equally, and spread the folly broad,

and these of the *Art Poétique*, 345 ff.:

Enfin de la licence on arrêta le cours;
Le magistrat des lois emprunta le secours.
Et, rendant par édit les poètes plus sages,
Défendit de marquer les noms et les visages.

The denunciation of "bawdry barefaced" in the paragraph on the ode is no doubt influenced by the well-known passage in the *Art Poétique*, II, 175 f.[1]

Le latin dans les mots brave l'honnêteté,
Mais le lecteur français veut être respecté.
Du moindre sens impur la liberté l'outrage
Si la pudeur des mots n'en adoucit l'image.

though whether Boileau would have regarded the morality of Mulgrave's,

1. Only ignorance of what Boileau really says in his *Art poétique* can explain Wolseley's statement (in his *Valentinian*) that Mulgrave could have found no support in his authorities for objecting to "bawdry" in poetry.

Not that warm thoughts of the transporting joy
Can shock the chastest or the nicest cloy,
But obscene words too gross to move desire,
Like heaps of fuel do but choke the fire.

as equivalent to his own two concluding lines is questionable.

Mulgrave's lines on the eschewing of unnatural language in dramatic dialogues:

Figures of speech which poets think too fine,
Art's needless varnish to make nature shine,
Are all but paint upon a beauteous face,
And in descriptions only claim a place.
But to make rage declaim, and grief discourse,
From lovers in despair fine things to force,
Must needs succeed, for who can choose but pity
To see poor heroes miserably witty?

are close to Boileau's, in the *Art Poétique*, III, 135 ff.:

Que devant Troie en flamme Hécube désolée,
Ne vienne point pousser une plainte ampoulée,
Ni sans raison décrire en quel affreux pays
« Par sept bouches l'Euxin reçoit le Tanaïs ».
Tous ces pompeux amas d'expressions frivoles
Sont d'un déclamateur amoureux des paroles.
.....
Ces grands mots dont alors l'acteur emplit sa bouche
Ne partent point d'un cœur que sa misère touche.

But what, beyond all these individual borrowings, shows that the poem was primarily inspired by Boileau's rather than Horace's example, is a certain unity of purpose, an undertone of critical integrity which forms a contrast with the *décousu* of Horace's epistle to the Pisones. This unity consists in a constant recurrence to the need of a balance between fancy and judgment and of an artistic symmetry which will give to a poetical production, beauty as a whole and not merely individual beauties. In one place, Mulgrave uses Boileau's term "reason" instead of the term "judgment" more popular with contemporary English critics:

Fancy is but the feather of the pen;
Reason is that substantial, useful part,
Which gains the head, while t'other wins the heart.

And there are several passages in which the superiority of the beauty of the whole to beauties of parts is expressed in words very like those of Boileau in the *Art Poétique*, I, 175-182:

> C'est peu qu'en un ouvrage où les fautes fourmillent,
> Des traits d'esprit semés de temps en temps pétillent.
> Il faut que chaque chose y soit mise en son lieu,
> Que le début, la fin répondent au milieu,
> Que d'un art délicat les pièces assorties
> N'y forment qu'un seul tout de diverses parties,
> Que jamais du sujet le discours s'écartant
> N'aille chercher trop loin quelque mot éclatant.

For example, speaking of "poetry":

> Tis not a flash of fancy which sometimes
> Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest rhymes,
> Bright as a blaze, but in a moment done;
> True wit is everlasting, like the sun,
> Which though sometimes beneath a cloud retired,
> Breaks out again, and is by all admired.

Or:

> But though this muse harmonious numbers yield,
> And every couplet be with fancy filled,
> If yet a just coherence be not made,
> Between each thought, and the whole model laid
> So right that every step may higher rise,
> As in a ladder, till it reach the skies;
> Trifles like these perhaps of late have past,
> And may be liked awhile, but never last.

Boileau's denunciation of conceits is echoed in:

> That silly thing men call sheer Wit avoid,
> With which our age so nauseously is cloyed.

The insistence on artistic perfection of which the whole poem breathes may be added to the characteristics which determine its indebtedness to Boileau above all other writers, though it shows a knowledge also of Horace, Vida, Rapin and Bossu.

Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*, though not published till 1684, was first written in 1670. It might appear, then, that it could not have been subject to the influence of the *Art poétique*; but it evidently did not spend the interim in a drawer, for it was

pointed out already by a contemporary of Roscommon, Gildon, in his *Laws of Poetry* (1721) that the story of the quack in Roscommon's poem,

> A quack, too scandalously mean to name,
> Had by man-midwifery got wealth and fame, etc.

illustrating how there are certain occupations for which some individuals seem to be born if they can only fall into them, is very closely imitated from the story of the Florentine doctor which introduces the fourth canto of Boileau's *Art poétique*. This shows that during the years of revision Roscommon's *Essay* came under the influence of Boileau's great work. Of course the poem is, as it proclaims itself to be, an Essay, not on Poetry, but on Translation; and it is, in fact, a congeries of somewhat disconnected precepts on the best manner of translating the classical authors into English verse. Nevertheless, many of these precepts would be as applicable to original composition as to translation, and many of them are borrowed from the *Art poétique*.

The attack on pedantry, so characteristic of the age of the Wits that was beginning, in the following lines:

> The soil intended for Pierian reeds,
> Must be well-purg'd from rank pedantic weeds.
> Apollo starts, and all Parnassus shakes
> At the rude rumbling Baralipton makes.
> For none have been with admiration read,
> But who, beside their learning, were well-bred,

is probably suggested by the *Art poétique*, IV, 121-124:

> Que les vers ne soient pas votre éternel emploi,
> Cultivez vos amis, soyez homme de foi.
> C'est peu d'être agréable et charmant dans un livre,
> Il faut savoir encore et converser et vivre.

The lines:

> Immodest words admit of no defence,
> For want of decency is want of sense.

are to be compared to the similar passage from Mulgrave quoted above and referred to what is probably the original of both in the *Art poétique*, II, 175, f.

The insistence on beauty of the whole rather than beauty of parts

which we found in Mulgrave and which probably goes back to the *Art poétique*, 175-182, is found in very similar language in Roscommon:

> On sure foundations let your fabric rise,
> And with attractive majesty surprise,
> Not by affected, meretricious arts,
> But strict, harmonious symmetry of parts,
> Which through the whole insensibly must pass,
> With vital heat to animate the mass.

The lines:

> Truth still is one; truth is divinely bright.
> No cloudy doubts obscure her native light;
> While in your thoughts you find the least debate,
> You may confound, but never can translate.
> Your style will this through all disguises show,
> For none explain more clearly than they know.

recall the *Art poétique*, ch. I, vs. 147-154:

> Il est certains esprits dont les sombres pensées
> Sont d'un nuage épais toujours embarrassées;
> Le jour de la raison ne le saurait percer.
> Avant donc que d'écrire, apprenez à penser.
> Selon que notre idée est plus ou moins obscure,
> L'expression la suit, ou moins nette, ou plus pure.
> Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement,
> Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.

Roscommon's remarks on the relation of poetry to money-getting may be connected with Boileau's animadversions on the same subject in his Fourth Canto. [1]

C. LE LUTRIN

We have already seen that the most popular of Boileau's works

1. For the important influence that some, at least, of their contemporaries attributed to the critical writings of Roscommon and Mulgrave, see below, p. 389.

In addition to the complete poetic treatises in verse mentioned in this chapter, Addison's *Account of the Greatest English Poets* may possibly be indebted — for its form — to the passage on the history of French poetry in Boileau's *Art poétique*.

— particularly during the Age of Dryden — was *Le Lutrin*; we shall, therefore, not be surprised to find that the translations and imitations of this work surpassed, in number, quality, and influence, those of any other work of Boileau. The aptness with which the poem applied to the political situation in England in the late seventies and eighties has also been pointed out above, and we shall therefore expect to find the English adaptations synchronize with the important events in the religious struggle of the times.

How exactly they did thus synchronize sometimes is nicely illustrated by the case of the earliest-known translation of a part of *Le Lutrin*. This translation, which was apparently never published, and which was discovered only recently, is dated October, 1678, the very month in which the Popish Plot frenzy came to a head through the discovery of the murdered body of Sir Edmund Godfrey; its authorship is attributed by the discoverer of the manuscript, Mr. Percy L. Babington, to no less a person than John Oldham.[1] The translation goes only to the end of the first Canto; the reason for the non-publication of this fragment may be that the author hoped to translate the entire poem. Through the kindness of Mr. Babington, I am enabled to publish this translation in Appendix E. Only the briefest commentary on it is necessary here, as the reader has the text to judge from.

The translation is a pretty faithful one, for the times; above all, the translator has yielded relatively little to the temptation to expand passages. The versification, especially in the rhymes, is very rough; this, of course, tends to confirm Oldham's authorship. Very little of Boileau's neatness in turn of expression, and almost nothing of his sense of measure, his good taste has been assimilated. It is Boileau's realism that appeals to these first translators of *Le Lutrin*[2]; it is curious how all of them revel in passages describing the gluttony of the ecclesiastics; where Boileau merely alludes, they spare us no details of grossness. The way in which

1. The reasons for this attribution (the justness of which I am not competent to discuss), as well as the whole story of his discovery, are set forth by Mr. Babington in his article, "Dryden not the Author of Macflecknoe", in *The Modern Language Review* for January, 1918. The manuscript containing the translation was found in the Bodleian Library (Rawlinson, poet. 123; 14616 in the Summary Catalogue). Mr. Babington is preparing a critical edition of Oldham.

2. Cf. Lanson's view of Boileau in his *Histoire de la littérature française* (8th revised edition), pp. 488–489.

the note is forced may be seen by comparing the passage, vs. 67-86:

> Far back in an apartment wisely made,
> Where noise can ne'er the privacy invade,
> .....
> Shrinks under and its twisted bedcords crack,

with the original in Boileau (*Le Lutrin*, ch. I, vs. 57-68); Boileau's twelve lines become twenty in English. Similarly, the five lines, vs. 148-152:

> Haste and his passion make him grace forget;
> .....
> Are swallowed and almost the passage choke,

correspond to one line in Boileau,

> Les morceaux trop hâtés se pressent dans sa bouche (vs. 110).

The passages in which the keenest satire against the clergy occurs, are often done with a great deal of spirit, e.g., vs. 119-140, 258-271. If Oldham made this translation, it is interesting to see him sharpening his satiric instrument on Boileau's whetstone a few months prior to the appearance of the *Satires upon the Jesuits*, almost the first finished work in the new satiric style; but it can hardly be said that this manuscript work itself shows a very keen or a very fine edge.

Not much more can be said for the first published translation of *Le Lutrin* (complete as the poem then was). This appeared in 1682 with the following title: *Le Lutrin, an heroic Poem written originally in French by Monsieur Boileau; Made English by N. O.; London, printed by J. A. for Benjamin Alsop at the Angel and Bible in the Poultry, 1682.* I cannot identify "N. O." The poem has never, as far as I know, been reprinted, and copies of it are extremely scarce; I have, therefore, reproduced it in Appendix F. Mediocre as the work is, one is a little puzzled at the extraordinary oblivion into which it fell at birth. I have never met a single mention of it in English literature; Crowne is always referred to as the first adapter of *Le Lutrin*; nor am I aware that it has ever been mentioned or quoted from except by Walter in his *Boileaus Wirkung auf seine englischen Zeitgenossen.* Yet the poem is not inferior in workmanship to Crowne's *Daeneids.* Its versification (of

which a marked characteristic is the frequency of feminine rhymes) is considerably better than that of the manuscript translation. On the other hand it is freer and less judicious in its expansions and interpolations, and is less pointed in the satirical passages. A feature of the work is the verse arguments or proems in octo-syllabic verse prefixed to each canto; their only effect is to throw the poem out of key; to cast about it a burlesque, not a mock-heroic atmosphere. It was some time before Englishmen could make the distinction between these two *genres*. Another bewildering feature of the poem is the way in which English institutions, like "conventicles" and "Yorkshire cloath", are casually introduced, though the *venue* remains in France. This inconsistency is noticed in "The Argument" to Canto II (were these "arguments" not by the translator?). The unfinished nature of the plot (Boileau had not yet added the last two cantos) is noted in "The Argument" to Canto IV.

The adapter who was most attracted by the political application that could be made of *Le Lutrin* was John Crowne, better known as one of the Restoration dramatists, who published *The Daeneids or Noble Labours of the Great Dean of Notre-Dame in Paris For the Erecting in his Quire a Throne for his Glory, and the Eclipsing the Pride of an Imperious, Usurping Character. An Heroic Poem in Four Cantos Containing a True History and Shews the Folly, Foppery, Luxury, Laziness, Pride, Ambition and Contention of the Romish Clergy*, in 1692, just four years after the Revolution.[1] Wycherley was somewhat unjust in referring to Crowne as "the Lutrin's dull translator" in his *Bill of Fare*;[2] Crowne's poem is not dull; it is more vigorous than either of the translations we have just examined. On the other hand, it distorts the form and spirit of Boileau's poem far more than either of these. As for the form, Crowne announces in his Dedication to the Earl of Mulgrave, that he is going to make free with it: "I am well assured the Lutrin pleases your Lordship, but I may doubt of my management of it; for I treat it as an English privateer would do a French prize; great part of it I throw away and I dash-brew and disguise the rest as I think good."[3] In fact, Crowne's poem is to be classed rather as an "imitation" (in Dryden's sense of the word) than as

1. The work was reprinted under the title of *The Church Scuffle* in the Third part of Dryden's *Miscellany Poems* in 1716.

2. See above, p. 125.

3. For the rest of the Dedication, see above, p. 12.

a " translation ". It preserves Boileau's division into four cantos, but the subject-matter of Crowne's cantos by no means always corresponds to that of Boileau's. Crowne's first canto, for example, takes us only as far as the end of Discord's speech, which covers most of the canto, though in Boileau it occupies only twelve lines. The beginning of the second Canto in Crowne corresponds to line 57 in Boileau's first canto, and a long passage is interpolated near the end of the same canto concerning preaching, a thing to which the prelate strongly objects. Boileau's second canto is much abbreviated on the other hand; indeed, the fourth canto of *Le Lutrin* is the only one which is transferred fairly completely into *The Daeneids*. Although the last two cantos of *Le Lutrin* had appeared in 1683, Crowne makes no use of them and carries his imitation no farther than the end of Boileau's fourth canto. As regards the scene of the action, Crowne apparently understood it to be in Notre-Dame, not, as Boileau intended, in the Sainte Chapelle; but he sometimes gets farther afield still, as where his political purpose makes him adapt the speech of Discord :

> Quoi ! dit-elle d'un ton qui fit trembler les vitres,

to conditions in England and drag in English parties :

> In one fair realm she [Peace] has scarce one single breast;
> How often there in the same person fight
> Whig, Tory, Williamite and Jacobite
> Who have by turns the better of the fray.

As to the distortion of the spirit of Boileau's *Lutrin* in Crowne's *Daeneids*, it is forecast in the title itself which emphasizes the fact that the poem " shews the folly, foppery, luxury, laziness, pride, ambition and contention of the Romish clergy. " It is evident that what attracted Crowne in *Le Lutrin* was simply the satire on this clergy; let us repeat that the poem appeared just four years after the Protestant Revolution in England. Every incident in the original which enables Crowne to cast contumely on the priests is expanded, and several such he invents. That delight in grossness of description, which we noted above as characteristic of all these early translators, reaches its climax in Crowne, partly because it offers him an opportunity to present the clerical foe in the most disgusting light. He simply revels in the coarse episodes, which he exaggerates and dwells upon in the spirit of burlesque rather than of mock-heroic. Boileau's *finesse* and lightness

of touch, which were poorly represented in the previous translations disappear utterly in the *Daeneids*. [1]

The heavy and emphatic coarseness of Crowne's taste is illustrated by the following lines :

> Of all the priests that wealthy dome supplied
> With laziness, with luxury and pride
> None deeper sunk or firmlier remained
> In peace and fat than he who o'er it reigned,
> The dean ; a solid priest in flesh and bone.
> He like a sleepy rowler trundled on
> Along all times ; and gathered as he rowled
> A heavy heap of fat and clammy mould.

As an example of expansion for the purpose of vilifying the clergy, take the following *tirade* based on lines 18-24 of Canto I of the Lutrin : [2]

> Great Notre-Dame, the high and stately scene
> Of our ensuing story, long had been
> Adorned and blest with many a deep divine,
> Not deep in arts but in down-beds and wine.
> Their great devotions doubly they exprest,
> In church by pomp, at home by Heavenly rest,
> It graced their master's service to maintain
> In ease themselves, his favourite gentlemen.
> On their soft beds the morn they dosed away,
> And left the quire the drudgery to pray ;
> And to rich lofty cushions to supply
> Their room i' Church and raise God's honour high.
> God was well served, though priests were never there ;

1. " *The Daeneids* ist unter dem frischen Eindruck der Zeitströmung verfasst. 1690 hatte Crowne seinen *English Friar* zur Verspottung der katholischen Geistlichkeit geschrieben. In derselben Tendenz versuchte er sich zwei Jahre später im komischen Epos. Seine dichterische Begabung aber hatte ihn nicht für dieses Gebiet geschaffen ; der formalen Seite dieser Dichtungsgattung wurde er nicht gerecht. " Grosse, *John Crownes Komödien und burleske Dichtung*, Leipzig, 1903), p. 94 ff.

2. Paris voyait fleurir son antique Chapelle :
Ses chanoines vermeils et brillants de santé
S'engraissaient d'une longue et sainte oisiveté.
Sans sortir de leurs lits, plus doux que leurs hermines,
Ces pieux fainéants faisaient chanter matines,
Veillaient à bien dîner, et laissaient en leur lieu
A des chantres gagés le soin de louer Dieu.

Bright residentiaries the cushions were.
The holy men ate, drunk and slept with zeal,
For Heaven's honour and the Church's weal,
Kept from themselves all sacrilegious toil;
True to their fat they were as rhemes to oil.
To annoint Gallic kings an angel brought
Much unctuous fat God sent his holy Lot.
Our pious canons which to keep from waste
Careful they were not to preach, pray or fast;
Or only fast to give themselves a whet.
So when they charged, the rout was dreadful great.
Sometimes whole lulling sermons from them streamed;
But ah! so gently, when they preached they seemed
Like Halcyons brooding o'er a slumbering wave,
To the Cathedral peaceful calms they gave.
No croaking preacher spoiled with tedious din
Good Sunday dinners or sweet weekly sin;
No noise was there but of harmonious sound.
Division there only in song was found.

It is clear how little relation there is between these battalions of rhyming couplets hurling themselves one after the other in monotonous attack on the clerical foe and the lightly touched *vignettes* of the *Lutrin*. Crowne's satire is often more vigorous than Boileau's, but it is lacking in delicacy and taste.

The picture of the old canon is entirely Crowne's work. It fills two pages at the close of Canto I of *The Daeneids*.

Boileau's masterly picture of the sleeping prelate in twelve lines [1] is rather diluted in the twenty-five English lines:

To the dean's palace stormy discord steered
And finds the bulky prelate sepulchred

1. *Le Lutrin*, I, 57–68:

Dans le réduit obscur d'une alcôve enfoncée,
S'élève un lit de plume à grands frais amassée;
Quatre rideaux pompeux, par un double contour,
En défendent l'entrée à la clarté du jour,
Là, parmi les douceurs d'un tranquille silence,
Règne sur le duvet une heureuse indolence.
C'est là que le prélat, muni d'un déjeuner,
Dormant d'un léger somme, attendait le dîner.
La jeunesse en sa fleur brille sur son visage;
Son menton sur son sein descend à double étage,
Et son corps ramassé dans sa courte grosseur,
Fait gémir les coussins sous sa molle épaisseur.

In an alcove and down ; in hopes at last
Of joyful resurrection to repast.
In his fair spreading cheeks the church's charge
Had raised a garden beautiful and large ;
And in two stories built his goodly chin,
To let these run to ruin were a sin.
The holy man did no expenses spare
To keep 'em faithfully in good repair ;
And every part about him fat and sound,
For they were church demeans and holy ground.
Rich curtains gave his slumbers strong defence
Against day's sacrilegious violence.
Soft pillows hid his cheeks and let no air
Approach to harm the lovely flowers there ;
For youth's spring flowers in his autumn grew,
Those cheeks possessing which were age's due.
All things in order were for dinner laid
When the great goddess her proud entry made.
The exact order highly pleased her eye ;
She knew the church by scrupulous decency.
In all the joys of silence, ease and pride
And with a breakfast strongly fortified,
The dean attending dinner slumbering lay
When thus the goddess drove his rest away.

Nothing can be more characteristic of the mock-heroic than the application of an elaborate simile in the Virgilian style to a frivolous incident, as in the following lines of *Le Lutrin*, referring to the rout of the would-be ravishers of *Le Lutrin* by the owl :

Ainsi lorsqu'en un coin qui leur tient lieu d'asile
D'écoliers libertins une troupe indocile
Loin des yeux d'un préfet au travail assidu,
Va tenir quelquefois un brelan défendu,
Si du veillant Argus la figure effrayante,
Dans l'ardeur du plaisir à leurs yeux se présente,
Le jeu cesse à l'instant, l'asile est déserté
Et tout fuit à grands pas le tyran redouté.

Crowne fails to appreciate his opportunity here and disposes of the passage in one couplet :

In wild confusion they slunk all away,
Like truants by their whipster catched at play.

The invocation to the muse of mock-heroic poetry, so characteristic of the *genre* also, is likewise entirely omitted by Crowne. It is perfectly evident that he had no artistic appreciation of Boileau's poem; Grosse's contrasting of the two poets can hardly be improved upon: "Der französische Dichter hat ein in sich abgerundetes, harmonisches Kunstwerk geschrieben; bei Crowne klingt öfters der schrille Ton der Tendenz durch."[1]

Meanwhile in 1682, the spirit of *Le Lutrin* had been introduced once and for all into English literature in that epoch-making little poem, *MacFlecknoe*, in which Dryden, taking his cue from Boileau, established in England the mock-heroic as that term was understood for more than a century afterwards. That is a brief statement of a view of the place of *MacFlecknoe* in literary history which I hold to be the true one, but which has been challenged at several points; its defence involves the establishment of certain definitions and distinctions, which had better perhaps be taken up here, before *MacFlecknoe* as an imitation of *Le Lutrin* is considered.

The term "mock-heroic" itself is apparently still used in widely different senses. In Dryden's time it was hardly employed at all, and much confusion arose from the fact that the word "burlesque" had to be pressed into service to denote two utterly different kinds of comic poem, as appears very clearly from the following remarks by Peter Motteux: "The grace and beauties of burlesque do chiefly consist in a disproportion between the style in which we speak of a thing and its true idea; this is the distinguishing mark of French and Italian burlesque, of which there seem to be two sorts; as when low and mean expressions are used to represent the greatest events, as in Scarron's Virgil-Travesty; or great and lofty terms to describe common things, as in Boileau's Lutrin and Tassoni's Secchia Rapita."[2] Later, the term "burlesque" was limited to the first of these "two sorts", and the term "mock-heroic" was introduced to describe the latter; and, as the eighteenth century proceeded, the distinction between these two terms came to be more and more strictly observed.[3] In the nineteenth century, however, this distinction tended to be

1. Wilhelm Grosse, *op. cit.*, p. 94 ff.

2. *The Gentleman's Journal*, January, 1693. The passage is quoted by Blount in his *De Re Poetica* (Characters and Censures), p. 78.

3. A good example of the correct use of these terms is to be found in James Beattie's *Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*.

relaxed, and the confusion of the seventeenth century has returned, with this difference, that now it is the term " mock-heroic " that has taken on the all-embracing signification ; in other words, Scarron and Boileau often seem to be lumped together by certain modern literary historians as writers of " mock-heroics ". If we are to get anywhere in our present discussion, we must return to the clear distinction observed in the eighteenth century. By " burlesque ", then, we shall agree to understand a poem in which an important and august action is presented in vulgar language, by " mock-heroic " one in which a trivial incident is clothed in all the pomp and circumstance of epic style ; or, to use Boileau's own illustration, " in the other burlesque Dido and Aeneas talked like a fish-wife and a porter, in this one a clock-maker's wife and a clock-maker talk like Dido and Aeneas. " [1]

But it will be objected that the " mock-heroic " spirit had appeared in literature before Boileau and Dryden. Unquestionably it had ; like all the great moods of the human spirit which express themselves in literature, the tragic, the romantic, the amatory, it no doubt antedated all expression and is certainly found full-blown in one of the earliest monuments of Greek literature, the *Batrachomyomachia*. There are mock-heroic passages in many poems which are not themselves wholly or mainly mock-heroics, for instance, many passages in Aristophanes and part of the story of the turbot in Juvenal's Fourth Satire. English literature had known the mock-heroic spirit centuries before Dryden ; a passing strain of it had appeared near the close of Chaucer's *Nonnes Prestes Tale*, John Heywood's *The Spider and the Flie* might be considered an early mock-heroic, and in the seventeenth century itself, Waller's *Battle of the Summer Isles* has sometimes been so classified. [2] But true as all this is, it in no way invalidates the statement made above regarding the place of *MacFlecknoe* in literary history. The fact that tragedy has existed at all times and in all countries does not prevent us from distinguishing Greek tragedy from Elizabethan or *The Sacrifice of Isaac* from *Phèdre* or from tracing the genealogy of these different species ; so it is a perfectly legitimate undertaking to show that, while the *Batrachomyomachia* and *Mac-*

1. *Le Lutrin*, Au Lecteur, 1674.

2. Dr. Johnson said of Waller's poem : " It is not easy to say whether it is intended to raise terror or merriment. The beginning is too splendid for jest, and the conclusion too light for seriousness. " See *Waller* in *The Lives of the Poets*.

Flecknoe are both of the mock-heroic family, they belong to different species and that the parent of the *MacFlecknoe* species is *Le Lutrin*.

In fact it has remained for certain modern critics to make objections of this order; it never seems to have occurred to the contemporaries of Dryden and Pope to seek the ancestors of *MacFlecknoe* and *The Rape of the Lock* in Greek or English literature. Yet all the mock-heroic poems mentioned in the preceding paragraph were known to them; the *Batrachomyomachia* was available in two translations at least, those of William Fowldes (1603) and George Chapman (1624), and possibly in a third by Thomas Purfoote (1579), and seems to have been widely read in the seventeenth century either in translation or in the original.[1] The fact is that all the poems of a mock-heroic character in earlier literature (with the exception of Italian mock-heroic to be mentioned presently) were distinguished from English mock-heroic of the Dryden-Pope variety in three ways, (1) the actors in them were animals, (2) as a necessary result of this, there was no real social satire in them, (3) the ironic atmosphere resulting from a contrast between the high dignity of epic style and the triviality of the subject-matter was not consistently maintained throughout the course of those poems, but was intermittent, giving way, now to burlesque, now to serious epic narrative. As for the *Batrachomyomachia*, in particular, which comes nearer to the eighteenth-century species of mock-heroic than any of the more modern poems mentioned, its Elizabethan translators seemed incapable of assimilating its subtler and more modern aspects and simply transformed it into an ordinary beast-fable[2]; not until the Homeric epic style was fully understood and appreciated could men see the point of the parodies of that style and of particular passages in Homer in the *Batrachomyomachia*; yet these parodic passages are the ones which the modern lover of mock-heroic most relishes and which link the oldest mock-heroic with the modern type. It is significant that, not until the influence of Boileau and Dryden became operative, did translations rendering faithfully the ironic and parodic side of the old Greek mock-epic appear in England.[3] Far from the *Batrachomyomachia*, then, being

1. See Friedrich Wild, *Die Batrachomyomachia in England* (Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, Wien und Leipzig, 1918). Fowldes' translation is reproduced by Wild.

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

3. Samuel Parker's *Homer in a Nutshell* (1700) and Thomas Parnell's *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice* (1717).

a possible ancestor of the Bolevian type of mock-heroic, we would be safe in saying that, on the contrary, it had to await the advent of *Le Lutrin* to be properly appreciated.[1]

There was, however, one other poem besides *Le Lutrin* which the contemporaries of Dryden and Pope usually associated with the beginnings of mock-heroic in England, and that poem was *La Secchia Rapita* of Alessandro Tassoni, published in Paris in 1622. The tradition which linked Tassoni's poem, *Le Lutrin*, *MacFlecknoe* and *The Rape of the Lock* continued, almost unchallenged, until the early nineteenth century, and it is not extinct yet.[2]

An adequate history of comic poetry in modern times establishing careful discriminations and definitions remains to be written. But it seems to me that when such a work is produced it will dispose of the still-prevalent idea that Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita* is in any sense the ancestor of that *genre* so characteristic of French and English neo-classicism, the mock-heroic, as exemplified in Boileau's *Lutrin*, and Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. In the first place its mere length distinguishes it from these poems. The *Secchia* has over six thousand lines, the *Lutrin* a little over one thousand, the *Rape* considerably less than one thousand. The concentrated irony which is the characteristic of the latter two poems is entirely incompatible with the diffuseness of the former. Indeed, I would go so far as to say, that if the " mock-heroic " as we know it in Boileau and Pope is correctly defined as a poem wherein the discrepancy between matter and style is maintained evenly throughout, that is to say, where the matter remains always trivial and the style remains always elevated, then the *Secchia Rapita* is not a mock-heroic at all. Why it was felt necessary to designate it as a *genre* essentially different from the other romances of chivalry of the Italian renaissance has never been made quite clear. Sismondi[3] maintained that it was not a new kind of epic in Italy but fell into

1. See Wild, *op. cit.*, for evidence of its popularity and the numbers of translations and imitations of it in the eighteenth century. Boileau, of course, knew the *Batrachomyomachia* and no doubt got many suggestions from it. He refers to it, as well as to *La Secchia Rapita*, in *Le Lutrin*, ch. IV, vs. 53-56.

O toi qui sur ces bords qu'une eau dormante mouille,
Vis combattre autrefois le rat et la grenouille.

The metrical scheme adopted by one of the early translators of the *Batrachomyomachia*, Fowldes, put his version rather in the class of the Italian burlesque epic than in the class of *Le Lutrin*.

2. For evidence see pp. 155-56 of this work.

3. *De la littérature du midi de l'Europe*, chap. XVI.

the class of the poems of Pulci, Berni, Ariosto. Carducci[1] defended the new nomenclature for the *Secchia* on the ground that, while there is humour in the *Morgante*, the *Orlando Innamorato* and the *Orlando Furioso*, it is incidental and does not prevent these poems being based on an acceptance of the mediaeval system of things, whereas the *Secchia* is a " riso spensierato sovra un tempo che fu ". But surely this is rather a definition of *burlesque* than of *mock-heroic*, if we follow the distinction of Boileau. And the subject-matter of the *Secchia* bears this out. A prolonged war between two cities is surely not a trivial matter. The incident with which it begins, the stealing of a bucket, *is* a trivial one ; and we may say therefore that the poem starts as a mock-heroic. But, once this incident has precipitated a real war, the mock-heroic ceases and we get a kind of medley of burlesque and chivalrous romance, which is as far removed as possible from the unity of effect produced by the poems we are concerned with. The council of the gods in Canto II is pure burlesque of the kind that Boileau roundly condemned, while the incident of Diana and Endymion, in Canto VIII, is a lyrical interlude worthy of Tasso or Guarini. Other incidents are enumerated by Carducci to show the variety of tonality in the poem, so to speak, and he concludes : " E in questo contrasto disordinato di principii e di forme avrai a punto le sorgenti del ridicolo, e quindi la novità artistica del poema eroicomico. "[2] Surely the one word " disordinato " sunders beyond cavil the Italian " eroicomico " from the classic mock-heroic of Boileau. The *Secchia* is in effect an example of the puerile romance of chivalry in the Italian style with its interminable and identical single combats illuminated by the light of a somewhat Cervantesque smile. Its metrical structure makes it also inevitably different from the classical mock-heroic. Dryden has pointed out how intimately connected this structure of the stanza is with the peculiar humouristic device of the poem — " the first six lines of the stanza seem majestical and severe ; but the two last turn them into a pleasant

1. Introduction to *La Secchia Rapita e altre poesie di Alessandro Tassoni*, 2nd ed., Florence, Barbèra, p. xxxviii ff.

2. Cf. Bobertag, " Zu Popes Rape of the Lock " (*Englische Studien*, v. I, p. 475) : " Und dies weiss er [i. e. Tassoni] trefflich zu bewirken, indem er alle Register der Komik, von dem feinsten bis zum gröbsten hinab, zu ziehen und wirkungsvoll zu verwenden versteht... Ebenso wenig wie moralische Bedenken macht er ästhetische Scrupel, Rohheiten und Absurditäten laufen mit unter, wenn es gilt, mit dem Pfeil der Satire zu treffen, und wenn es blos gilt, Lachen zu erregen, so schadet es auch nicht ".

ridicule." [1] Surely this revolving-stage form of contrasts has nothing in common with the ironic smile suffusing every word of the *Lutrin*, not concentrated in a line from time to time. To sum up the differences between the Italian and the French and English mock-heroic by going back to the distinction in subject-matter, we may say that the *Secchia Rapita* expresses a society which had come to realize the hollowness of some of the big things that had been taken seriously for centuries, but that the *Lutrin* and the *Rape of the Lock* reveal a further stage in evolution, the realization of the infinite importance that men give to little things and of the hollowness of these little things also.

My conclusion then is that the *Secchia Rapita* may be eliminated from our study of serious influences on the English mock-heroic. It is certain, of course, that its title suggested the title of Pope's famous poem; it is possible that single lines or successions of lines may sometimes be borrowed from it, though I have failed to detect such with any certainty; but there can be no question of any real literary influence like the borrowing of a theme or devices of style. The poem which introduced the mock-heroic *genre* into England as a model for writers, was the *Lutrin*. [2]

1. Dryden, *Original and Progress of Satire*. The passage from which the quotation is made is one of the difficulties in the way of sharply distinguishing Tassoni's mock-heroic from Boileau's. Dryden seems to link them: "Tassoni and Boileau have left us the best examples of this way, in the *Secchia Rapita* and the *Lutrin*; and next them Merlin Coccaius in his *Baldus*. I will speak only of the two former, because the last is written in Latin verse..... Boileau, if I am not much deceived, has modelled from hence his famous *Lutrin*. He had read the burlesque poetry of Scarron with some kind of indignation, as witty as it was, and found nothing in France that was worthy of his imitation; but he copied the Italian so well that his own may pass for an original." The inclusion of the Italian Folengo in this company, however, suggests that Dryden had not worked out for himself a consistent conception of "mock-heroic". Besides, the prestige of Italian poetry was still so great at the close of the seventeenth century, and its service in inventing new poetical forms for all Europe had so long a history that Italy was liable to get the credit for the inception of any new *genre*.

2. In the passage quoted below from Spence, there will seem to be another contradiction to my statements. Such linkings of Tassoni and Boileau I have to admit to be common among English Augustan writers. I can only repeat the explanation given above. A reviewer in *The Quarterly Review* of April, 1819, writes: "Mr. Walker relates 'that a similar cause gave rise to the *Dunciad* and to the *Secchia Rapita*. While Tassoni's mind was in a state of irritation from the repeated attacks of the critics, he conceived the idea of writing a mock-heroic poem; in which while he permitted his vein of wit and humour

Is Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* indebted to the *Lutrin*? Unquestionably! The external evidence falls under four heads: (1) We have seen that Boileau was familiar to Dryden as early as 1673[1], (2) just about the same time that he was composing *MacFlecknoe* he must have been engaged in revising Soame's translation of Boileau's *Art poétique* which would naturally bring Boileau's other great work to his attention, (3) we have seen[2] that in 1693 he showed a detailed acquaintance with the *Lutrin*, even quoting parallels from the *Aeneid* to passages in it, (4) we have the following anecdote from Dean Lockier, telling of his visit to Will's and of his meeting Dryden there: "The second time that ever I was there, Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. 'If anything of mine is good', says he, 'tis *MacFlecknoe*, and I value myself the more upon it because it is the first piece of ridicule in heroics.' On hearing this I plucked up my spirit so far as to say in a voice but just loud enough to be heard, that *MacFlecknoe* was a very fine poem, but that I had not imagined it to be the first that was ever writ that way. On this Dryden turned short upon me, as surprised

to follow freely, he might indulge in the virulence of invective against the open and secret enemies of his literary reputation.' This gratuitous conjecture, for it is really nothing more, had already misled the critics and commentators of Pope and Boileau. They can scarcely be called imitators of Tassoni. The *Secchia Rapita* merely gave the hint to the authors of *The Rape of the Lock* and the *Lutrin*. If Tassoni ridicules the habits and manners and opinions of private life and private individuals, this was only accessory to his main plan; he had higher objects in view. Tassoni detested the foreign rulers of Italy... Pope and Boileau have inlaid their little epics with happy imitations of the most celebrated passages of the ancient classics. Tassoni imitates them with less ostentation. His irony blends almost insensibly with the character and plan of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* and the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. His personages were of less importance to him than his subject. For the purposes of his satire, he has borrowed the general colouring of epic poetry, whilst parodies of particular passages were more useful to Pope and Boileau, to whom the fables of their poems only served as vehicles for their sarcasm upon peculiar classes of society." (See *Q. R.*, v. XXI, pp. 506-08). And in *The Monthly Review* of March, 1827, occurs the following passage: "Some critics have imagined that it [i. e., the *Secchia Rapita*] suggested to Pope his *Rape of the Lock* and to Boileau his *Lutrin*. The name of Pope's beautiful composition may perhaps have been derived from Tassoni, but there is no other resemblance between the two works. Boileau owes still less to the Italian." (See *M. R.*, new series, v. IV, p. 326).

1. See above, p. 113.
2. See pp. 6-7.

at my interposing ; asked me how long I had been a dealer in poetry, and added with a smile : ' Pray, sir, what is it that you *did* imagine to have been writ so before ? ' I named Boileau's *Lutrin* and Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita*, which I had read, and knew that Dryden had borrowed some strokes from each. ' 'Tis true, ' said Dryden, ' I had forgotten them ' ".[1] But the internal evidence is more convincing. Direct borrowings of lines or passages are quite undemonstrable ; Schenck's conjectures[2] in this direction seem to me almost worthless. Moreover, Dryden's poem is, of course, not *primarily* a mock-heroic but a satire (or rather a lampoon).[3] But it is certainly the first instance in English literature of a poem in which the spirit of personal satire (which had hitherto assumed the most coarse and violent forms) has clothed itself with the subtle and ironic manners of the mock-epic. It is probable that the animus felt by Dryden against Shadwell was much more sincere than the carefully manufactured literary indignation of Hall and Marston. Yet the literary satires of the latter are unmitigated vituperation without restraint or subtlety of effect ; whereas *MacFlecknoe* conceals the iron hand beneath the silk glove. And to attain this effect, Dryden adopts the form of the mock-epic. Just as in the *Lutrin* the paltry quarrel of some church-officials over the placing of a lectern is treated in the dignified style of Virgilian epic, so here the succeeding of one wretched poetaster to another is treated as though it were the succeeding of one monarch to another, and the solemnity of the language increases in proportion as the meanness of the subject becomes more pronounced. As I have intimated, it is difficult to convince of indebtedness in this case by the method of parallel passages ; one can only appeal to the literary judgment, and I make that appeal by asking the reader to compare the opening six lines of *MacFlecknoe* with the opening

1. Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 60. This rather bluntly obtruded piece of *Quellenforschung*, far from alienating Dryden, seems to have been the foundation of a life-long friendship between him and Lockier.

2. Schenck, *Garth und seine Stellung zum komischen Epos*, p. 51. Schenck thinks the following passages parallels : *McF.* 24-26 (*Lut.* I, 67-68) ; *McF.* 120-121 (*Lut.*, I, 121-124) ; *McF.* 60-61 (*Lut.*, I, 142-144).

3. It has sometimes been contended that *MacFlecknoe* has no mock-heroic character at all, mainly on the ground that the subject is not a trivial one, being the crowning of a king. But surely the subject is rather the succeeding of one wretched poetaster to another, which is surely a trivial one ; and this is treated *as if it were* the succession of one monarch to another, which adds the element of mock-heroic.

four lines of the *Lutrin* and then to say whether the very development of the mock-heroic idea, its gradual emergence (in the sixth line of *Mac Flecknoe* and in the fourth of *Le Lutrin*) from the solemn epic beginning is not identical in both. The elaborate rhetorical speeches and the classical simile:

> So Romulus, 'tis sung by Tiber's brook,
> Presage of sway from twice six vultures took,

are quite in the style of *Le Lutrin*. Possibly a more matter-of-fact indebtedness might be argued for in the description of the Barbican (as an imitation of the Sainte-Chapelle) and in the introduction of the figure of Fame (from Boileau's " renommée "):

> Now empress Fame had published the renown
> Of Shadwell's coronation through the town,

but the important point is not borrowings in detail but the general similarity in style between the two poems. This is not the place to discuss the evidence in *MacFlecknoe* of the influence of Boileau's inquisitorial methods against bad poets (through his *Ninth Satire* and in the battle of the books in *Le Lutrin*), but they may be referred to in passing.

MacFlecknoe, then, may be regarded as the first poem in English (not a mere translation or adaptation) which utilizes for satiric purpose the form of the mock-heroic as established by Boileau[1]. But it is obviously of insufficient magnitude and elaborateness of plot to be classed technically as a mock-heroic. The first complete mock-heroic in English is Garth's *The Dispensary* and here it is possible to trace a much more exact indebtedness to Boileau.

In the following paragraph of his " Preface ", Garth pretends to acknowledge the full limit of his debt to Boileau, but his confession is a little disingenuous: " Their (his critics') next objection is that I have imitated the *Lutrin* of Monsieur Boileau. I must own I am proud of the imputation; unless their quarrel be that I have not done it enough; but he that will give himself the trouble of examining, will find I have copied him in nothing but in two or three lines in the *Complaint* of *Mollesse*, Canto II, and in one in his first

1. In the article referred to above (see p. 143), Mr. Percy L. Babington has called in question Dryden's authorship of *MacFlecknoe*. His article provoked a considerable controversy, which is well summarized in Mr. Mark van Doren's *Poetry of John Dryden* (pp. 339-350).

Canto ; the sense of which line is entirely his, and I could wish it were not the only good one in mine. " Unfortunately, " he that will give himself the trouble of examining " will find that the copying is on a much larger scale ; though Schenck goes altogether too far in the opposite direction of discovering parallels where there is probably mere coincidence, just as he did in the case of *MacFlecknoe*.[1]

In some measure the same qualifications made in defining *MacFlecknoe* as a mock-heroic are applicable to *The Dispensary*. The satiric purpose in both is much more in the foreground than in the French poem. Moreover, *The Dispensary* is very far indeed from being a mere imitation of the *Lutrin*. Many of the literary influences of the age are evident in it, that of Milton, for example. A place is accorded to long and picturesque descriptions of natural scenes and phenomena, to didactic harangues, to literary reviews which Boileau refuses to such things in his spare, dry narrative. In fact there is extremely little narrative in *The Dispensary* ; we are kept waiting through four cantos for the action to begin. Nevertheless it is perfectly clear that the writer has had the general scheme and method of the *Lutrin* before his eyes all the time. In the first place the poem is divided into six cantos just as the *Lutrin* is. The subject is a quarrel between two parties, the apothecaries and the physicians over the building of the Dispensary, just as the subject of *Le Lutrin* is a quarrel between the followers

1. Garth's contemporaries were in no doubt as to his indebtedness to *Le Lutrin*. *The Dispensary* is usually coupled by them with Boileau's poem. See, for example, Rowe's *Account of Boileau's Writings* (in Ozell's translation of *Le Lutrin*), where, after referring to *Le Lutrin* and *The Dispensary*, he says : " And since I have mentioned these two poems together, it may not be improper to observe that, in the latter of them, though writ upon a very different subject, there are some passages that are plainly imitations or indeed even translations of the former : those who will take the trouble to compare them, now they are both in one language, will be best able to judge how near the translator of *Le Lutrin* comes to the beauties which all the world has so justly admired in Dr. Garth... " The Abbé Le Blanc, in his *Letters on the English and French Nations* (Letter XI), says : " You see, the English poets are to blame, in charging ours with flattery, as a vice peculiar to them. Perhaps the celebrated Dryden, Rowe, Addison, and Dr. Garth, have carried it farther, than any writer of what nation soever. Notwithstanding the praise the English bestow on this last author, on account of his *Dispensary*, which is only an imitation of the *Lutrin*, he has not surpassed Boileau except in exaggerating the praises he has copied from him to celebrate King William. " (Eng. Trans, v. I, p. 312).

of two church dignitaries over the placing of a lectern. This paltry quarrel serves as a basis for satirizing the self-seeking charlatanry of both apothecaries and physicians, as the quarrel in *Le Lutrin* serves as a basis for satirizing the envy and sloth of the churchmen. In both poems these trivial incidents are related in the high epic vein, with invocations to the muse, numerous elaborate similes in the Virgilian style, an elaborate "machinery" of allegorical personages who guide or goad on the human actors, sometimes assuming their shapes, the pompous description of assemblies of the parties with the high-sounding harangues of the different counsellors, cleverly introduced panegyrics of the monarchs and great men of the respective poets' countries, elaborate openings to each Canto in the form of a natural description or an invocation. The last Canto of *The Dispensary*, it should be especially noticed, is quite parallel in spirit to the last Canto of *Le Lutrin*, the appeasing spirit of Health in the former appearing after the storm of conflict just like Piété in the latter. The indebtedness of Garth to Boileau is nowhere clearer, however, than in his use of allegorical figures. Sloth is modelled with extreme closeness on Mollesse, and she introduces indirectly the praise of William III's royal activity just as Mollesse introduces that of Louis XIV's. Moreover, she appeals to his Phantom for help just as Mollesse appeals to La Nuit. Envy is a composite of La Discorde and La Chicane; and Garth introduces more abstractions which take hints from Boileau's figures, Discord and Disease notably.

These general resemblances between the two poems are re-inforced by specific evidences of imitation in expressions which I proceed to present, following the natural order of the passages in *The Dispensary*.

The description of Sloth and her abode seems to be a composite of *Le Lutrin*, II, 97-106 and *Le Lutrin*, I, 57-68:

> This place so fit for undisturbed repose
> The god of Sloth for his asylum chose,
> Upon a couch of down in these abodes,
> Supine with folded arms he thoughtless nods;
> Indulging dreams his godhead lull to ease,
> With murmurs of soft rills, and whispering trees.
> The poppy and each numbing plant dispense
> Their drowsy virtue, and dull indolence;
> No passions interrupt his easy reign,
> No problems puzzle his lethargic brain;

But dark oblivion guards his peaceful bed,
And lazy fogs hang lingering o'er his head.
As at full length the pampered monarch lay
Battening his ease, and slumbering life away,
A spiteful noise his downy chains unties,
Hastes forward and increases as it flies.

Le Lutrin, II, 97-106 :

L'air qui gémit du cri de l'horrible décesse,
Va jusque dans Cîteaux réveiller la Mollesse.
C'est là qu'en un dortoir elle fait son séjour,
Les plaisirs nonchalants folâtrent à l'entour :
L'un pétrit dans un coin l'embonpoint des chanoines,
L'autre broie en riant le vermillon des moines.
La Volupté la sert avec des yeux dévots,
Et toujours le Sommeil lui verse des pavots.
Ce soir, plus que jamais, en vain il les redouble.
La Mollesse à ce bruit se réveille, se trouble,
Quand la Nuit, qui déjà va tout envelopper,
D'un funeste récit vient encor la frapper,
Lui conte du prélat l'entreprise nouvelle.

Le Lutrin, I, 57-68 :

Dans le réduit obscur d'une alcôve enfoncée,
S'élève un lit de plume à grands frais amassée :
Quatre rideaux pompeux, par un double contour,
En défendent l'entrée à la clarté du jour.
Là, parmi les douceurs d'un tranquille silence,
Règne sur le duvet une heureuse indolence.
C'est là que le prélat, muni d'un déjeunêr,
Dormant d'un léger somme, attendait le dîner.
La jeunesse en sa fleur brille sur son visage :
Son menton sur son sein descend à double étage,
Et son corps, ramassé dans sa courte grosseur,
Fait gémir les coussins sous sa molle épaisseur.

The lines describing the awakening of Sloth :

The slumbering god, amazed at this new din,
Thrice strove to rise, and thrice sunk down again.
Listless, he stretched, and gaping rubbed his eyes,
Then faltered thus betwixt half-words and sighs,

are very closely imitated from *Le Lutrin*, II, 117-120 :

A ce triste discours, qu'un long soupir achève,
La Mollesse en pleurant sur un bras se relève,
Ouvre un œil languissant, et, d'une faible voix,
Laisse tomber ces mots qu'elle interrompt vingt fois.

Canto I of *The Dispensary*, from line 115 to the end, is largely indebted to two parts of *Le Lutrin*, Canto II, 121 to the end, and Canto I, 17-24. This passage in *The Dispensary* is indeed mainly an expansion of the closing part of the second Canto of *Le Lutrin*. In both, Sloth (or Mollesse) complains of the "good old times" when all men, even kings, obeyed his will, and in both this complaint neatly introduces the indirect praise of the activities of the respective monarchs. Then Sloth complains further that even the College of Physicians which he had thought to be a safe asylum is becoming a scene of activity just as *La Mollesse* rages at the strife that has broken out in her last sanctuary, the Church. It is in the enumeration of the classes of people over whom Sloth had extended his sway formerly that Garth introduces the lines from *Le Lutrin* Canto I, in expanded form to satirize (somewhat irrelevantly to *his* purpose) the "reverend worthies of the gown". Three lines of this passage:

Deep sunk in down, they, by my gentle care,
Avoid th'inclemencies of the morning air,
And leave to tattered crape the drudgery of prayer [1],

are among those few which Garth, by a foot-note, admits to be imitated from *Le Lutrin*. The other admission, as regards this Canto, is as to the lines:

The peals of Nassau's arms these eyes unclose,
Mine he molests to give the world repose. [2]

But the evidence of imitation is quite evident in, for example, the lines:

1. Cf. *Le Lutrin*, I, 21-24:
Sans sortir de leurs lits, plus doux que leurs hermines,
Ces pieux fainéants faisaient chanter matines,
Veillaient à bien dîner, et laissaient en leur lieu
A des chantres gagés le soin de louer Dieu.
2. Cf. *Le Lutrin*, II, 133-144:
Ce doux siècle n'est plus. Le ciel impitoyable
A placé sur leur trône un prince infatigable,
etc.

'Twas in this reverend dome I sought repose
These walls were that asylum I had chose.

Je croyais, loin des lieux d'où ce prince m'exile,
Que l'église du moins m'assurait un asile.

The borrowings from *Le Lutrin* in the second Canto of *The Dispensary* are less numerous and important. The description of Envy, her lair and her attendants, borrows " strokes " (as Garth's contemporaries would have put it) from *Le Lutrin*, I, 41 ff. ; V, 77 ff. ; and V, 37-44, that is to say, from the descriptions of La Discorde and La Chicane :

At length approaching where bleak Envy lay,
The hissing of her snakes proclaimed the way.

La Discorde, à l'aspect d'un calme qui l'offense,
Fait siffler ses serpents, s'excite à la vengeance.

Around the fiend in hideous order sate
Foul bawling infamy and bold debate :
Gruff discontent, through ignorance misled,
And clamorous faction at her party's head ;
Restless sedition still dissembling fear,
And sly hypocrisy with pious leer.

On l'appelle Chicane ; et ce monstre odieux
Jamais pour l'équité n'eut d'oreilles ni d'yeux.
La Disette au teint blême et la triste Famine,
Les Chagrins dévorants et l'infâme Ruine,
Enfants infortunés de ses raffinements
Troublent l'air d'alentour de longs gémissements.

Envy takes the human form of *Colon* just as Discorde assumes the person of " un vieux chantre " :

She said and straight shrill Colon's person took,
In morals loose, but most precise in look.

A ces mots, d'un bonnet couvrant sa tête énorme,
Elle prend d'un vieux chantre et la taille et la forme.

Le Lutrin, I, 53-54.

The speech (Canto II, 164-203) of Envy to Horoscope, borrows from the speech of Discord to the Prelate (*Le Lutrin*, I, 73-80) and from the speech of the Prelate to his followers (*Le Lutrin*, I, 129-

141). What follows this speech is also pretty closely modelled on *Le Lutrin*, I, 142 f. :

> At this famed Horoscope turned pale, and straight
> In silence tumbled from his chair of state, etc.

> Le prélat à ces mots verse un torrent de larmes,
> Il veut, mais vainement, poursuivre son discours :
> Ses sanglots redoublés en arrêtent le cours, etc.

and Squirt arrives in aid of Horoscope, just as Sidrac comes to the help of the prelate. The line,

> While in his breast the Fury breathed a storm,

is suggested by *Le Lutrin*, I, 81-82 :

> Elle dit, et, du vent de sa bouche profane,
> Lui souffle, avec ces mots, l'ardeur de la Chicane.

The third Canto of *The Dispensary* resembles in its general outlines the fourth Canto of *Le Lutrin*, the morning sleep of both Horoscope and the *chantre* being troubled by thoughts of their opponents' schemes and these worries ending in both cases by their summoning, through their faithful messengers, a general assembly of their followers to devise schemes of defence with, in both cases, the resultant welter of speeches.

[It may be pointed out that in the words Horoscope addresses to himself in the morning, there is obvious indebtedness, not to *Le Lutrin* but to the Eighth Satire of Boileau (the so-called Satire on Man). The passage :

> Mankind one day serene and free appear ;
> The next, they're cloudy, sullen and severe ;
> New passions, new opinions still excite,
> And what they like at noon, they leave at night,

recalls two passages of the Eighth Satire :
ll. 35-39 :

> Mais l'homme, sans arrêt dans sa course insensée,
> Voltige incessamment de pensée en pensée ;
> Son cœur toujours flottant entre mille embarras,
> Ne sait ni ce qu'il veut ni ce qu'il ne veut pas,

and ll. 49-52 :

Voilà l'homme en effet. Il va du blanc au noir,
Il condamne au matin ses sentiments du soir ;
Importun à tout autre, à soi-même incommode,
Il change à tous moments d'esprit comme de mode,

and what follows this passage is much indebted to l. 243 f. of the Eighth Satire.]

The threat that the Dispensary will be destroyed :

That project the Dispensary they call,
Before the Moon can blunt her horns, shall fall,

recalls the chantre's :

Non, s'il est abattu, je ne saurais plus vivre,
A moi, Girot, je veux que mon bras m'en délivre.

The plea of Horoscope for help from Disease (III, 99-114) recalls the address of the prelate to Chicane (*Le Lutrin*, V, 61-76).

Line 146 ff. of *The Dispensary*, Canto III,

We here had met on some more safe design,
And on no other business but to dine,

seems to recall several lines of *Le Lutrin*, Canto IV, e. g. :

l. 155 f. :

Pour les en arracher Girot, s'inquiétant,
Va crier qu'au Chapitre un repas les attend.

l. 159 f. :

Ils courent au Chapitre, et chacun se pressant
Flatte d'un doux espoir son appétit naissant.
Mais, ô d'un déjeuner vaine et frivole attente !
A peine ils sont assis, que, d'une voix dolente,
Le chantre désolé, lamentant son malheur,
Fait mourir l'appétit et naître la douleur.
Le seul chanoine, Evrard, d'abstinence incapable,
Ose encor proposer qu'on apporte la table.

l. 204 :

Du reste, déjeunons, messieurs, et buvons frais.

l. 210 ff. :

Donnons à ce grand œuvre une heure d'abstinence,
Et qu'au retour, tantôt, un ample déjeuner
Longtemps nous tienne à table, et s'unisse au dîner.

Similarly, lines 169-177 :

> The priests increased and piety decayed
> .....
> And patriots for a place abandoned fame.

recall Canto VI, 31-42 of *Le Lutrin*.

In Canto IV of *The Dispensary*, Horoscope's suggestion that Vagellius' oracle should be consulted (ll. 156-160, ll. 168-9) recalls ll. 25-28 of Canto V of *Le Lutrin*. Lines 334-339 (Fortune's address to Horoscope) :

> Hail, sacred seer! Thy embassy I know,
> Wars must ensue, the fates will have it so.
> Dread feats shall follow, and disasters great,
> Pills charge on pills, and bolus bolus meet :
> Both sides shall conquer, and yet both shall fail,
> The mortar now, and then the urinal

are pretty closely modelled on *Le Lutrin*, V, 81-84 :

> Chantres, ne craignez plus une audace insensée,
> Je vois, je vois au chœur la masse replacée,
> Mais il faut des combats. Tel est l'arrêt du sort ;
> Et surtout évitez un dangereux accord.

The fight between the two parties in the fifth Canto corresponds, of course, to the similar contest in the fifth Canto of *Le Lutrin*. The breaking-up of the general conflict into a series of single combats is identical in the two poems.

The complaint of Discord that her attempt to stir up controversy threatens to fall through (ll. 25-44) is closely modelled on *Le Lutrin*, I, 45-52, and her approach to Mirmillo's bed in the assumed form of Querpo (ll. 45-46) has its prototype in lines 53-56 of the same Canto of *Le Lutrin*.

Lines 105-106 of Canto V :

> The fury spoke, then in a moment fired
> The hero's breast with tempests, and retired.

imitate lines 81-82 of Canto I of *Le Lutrin* :

> Elle dit, et, du vent de sa bouche profane,
> Lui souffle, avec ces mots, l'ardeur de la chicane.

It is possible, but doubtful, that the reference to Fame (ll. 195-196, 201-204) in this Canto has any necessary indebtedness to the

Renommée of *Le Lutrin* (II, 1-6, V, 98-100). This abstraction had been used by Dryden in *MacFlecknoe* and may have come thence to Garth.

Lines 231-232 :

> To paint each knight, their ardour and alarms,
> Would ask the Muse that sung the frogs in arms.

recall these lines of *Le Lutrin* (IV, 53-59) :

> O toi qui sur ces bords qu'une eau dormante mouille,
> Vis combattre autrefois le rat et la grenouille.
> .....
> Muse, prête à ma bouche une voix plus sauvage,
> Pour chanter le dépit, la colère, la rage.

Lines 303-6 :

> At his once-favoured friend a tome he threw
> That from its birth had slept unseen till now.
> Stunned with the blow the battered bard retired,
> Sunk down, and in a simile expired.

seem to be compounded of lines 151-6 :

> Oh ! que d'écrits obscurs, de livres ignorés,
> Furent en ce grand jour de la poudre tirés !
> Vous en fûtes tirés, *Almerinde et Simandre* ;
> Et toi, rebut du peuple, inconnu *Caloandre*,
> Dans ton repos, dit-on, saisi par Gaillerbois,
> Tu vis le jour alors pour la première fois.

and of lines 165-8 of Canto V of *Le Lutrin* :

> Au plus fort du combat, le chapelain Garagne
> Vers le sommet du front atteint d'un *Charlemagne*,
> (Des vers de ce poème effet prodigieux !)
> Tout prêt à s'endormir, bâille et ferme les yeux.

The general resemblance between the last cantos of the two poems has already been pointed out. The opening lines are strikingly similar and Harvey's advice to Health to seek out Atticus (ll. 334-352) — who stands for Lord Somers — to compose the quarrels of her sectaries, is an exact parallel to Themis' counsel to Piété to obtain the interceding powers of Ariste — who stands for M. de Lamoignon (*Lutrin*, VI, 105-120). The account of the decay of the old-time zeal of physicians (ll. 310-321) :

With just resentments and contempt you see
The foul dissensions of the faculty;
How your sad sickening art now hangs her head,
And once a science, is become a trade.
Her sons ne'er rifle her mysterious store,
But study nature less, and lucre more, etc.

corresponds to Piété's lament over the decay of true religious zeal (*Le Lutrin*, VI, 32-58). The description of Death in his lair (ll. 127-140) is perhaps indebted for some touches to *Le Lutrin*, V, 37-38, 41-44.

I have discussed the relationship of *The Dispensary* to *Le Lutrin* in considerable detail, because I am anxious to dispose definitely of the idea that the *mock-heroic genre* is indigenous to English literature or has come into it through other avenues. No one who reads the above evidence can doubt that the author of *The Dispensary* wrote in effect with the text of *Le Lutrin* before his eyes. But for the history of literature the important thing is, not that Garth imitated or actually copied such and such lines of Boileau, but that he succeeded in so far as his undistinguished literary endowments permitted, in infusing into English literature for the first time, in the form of an elaborate and substantial epic, that spirit of subtle and diffused irony in narrative which gives, a few years later, to English literature the masterpiece of all mock-epics, *The Rape of the Lock*.[1]

1. Before leaving the subject of the relation of *The Dispensary* to *Le Lutrin*, I shall support my arguments by quotations from some eighteenth-century critics, who seem to imply by their coupling of the two poems, a relation between them. Blackmore's lines in his *Satire against Wit*:

Felonious Garth, pursuing this design,
Smuggles French wit, as others silk and wine,

seem to aim at Garth's borrowings from Boileau, if they aim at anything. Addison, in his seventh paper on "Paradise Lost" (*Spectator*, 273) says, speaking of allegorical figures in epics: "We find in mock-heroic poems, particularly in *The Dispensary* and *Le Lutrin*, several allegorical persons of this nature, which are very beautiful in those compositions and may perhaps be used as an argument that the authors of them were of opinion such characters might have a place in an epic work." J. Warton, in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (I, p. 206 ff.) calls *The Dispensary* "a palpable imitation of *Le Lutrin*", and says: "The behaviour and sentiments of Sloth, the first imaginary being that occurs, are almost literaly translated from Boileau." Kames, in his *Elements of Criticism* (p. 40), discussing the frigidity of epic "machinery" says: "A burlesque poem, such as *Le Lutrin* or *The Dispensary*, may employ machinery with success, for these poems, though they assume the air of history, give entertainment chiefly by their pleasant and ludicrous pictures to which machinery contributes, etc."

In 1708 appeared a translation of *Le Lutrin* by John Ozell[1], to which is prefixed an "Account of Boileau's writings, by N. Rowe, Esq."[2], which has been fully treated above, but from which a few paragraphs may be quoted here:

I won't venture to say this translation is the most correct and finished piece of its kind that we have, but I believe most people will allow that the author of it is perfectly master of Boileau and in some places has even improved him, to mention that only of

Dans le réduit obscur, etc.

and so on for a dozen verses; where I think the English at least equal if not superior to the French.

1. On Ozell, see *Dictionary of National Biography*. The article in the D. N. B. assigns thirty-one translations to his pen. The writer thinks they are of mediocre quality. Of the truth of this judgment we can form an opinion after examining those which concern us. What Ozell's own opinion of his work was we may judge from the following irate answer of his to Pope's mention of him in the *Dunciad*: "As for my learning, the envious wretch (Pope) knew, and everybody knows, that the whole bench of bishops not long ago were pleased to give me a purse of guineas for discovering the erroneous translations of the Common Prayer in Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, etc. As for my genius, let Mr. Cleland show better verses in all Pope's works than Ozell's version of Boileau's *Lutrin*, which the late Lord Halifax was so pleased with." (*Weekly Medley*, Sept. 5, 1729). "His attentions to literature took the form of a series of translations from foreign classics which were tolerably accurate and probably useful in their day, though, as Chalmers significantly says: 'it was his misfortune to undertake works of humour and fancy which were qualities he did not himself possess and therefore could not do justice to in others.'"

Cf. Pope's *The Translator*:

Ozell at Sanger's call invoked his muse,
For who to sing for Sanger could refuse?
His numbers such as Sanger's self might use,
Reviving Perrault, murd'ring Boileau, he
Slandered the Ancients first, then Wycherley;
Which yet not much that old bard's anger raised,
Since those were slandered most whom Ozell praised.
Nor had the gentle Satire caused complaining,
Had not sage Rowe pronounced it entertaining;
How great must be the judgment of that writer,
Who the Plain-Dealer damns and prints the biter.

2. Rowe's "Account, etc." is reprinted in the *Works of Rowe*, v. I, p. 61 London, 1733. A writer in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, v. VIII, p. [illegible], has acquired the mistaken idea that it was Rowe who made the translation of *Le Lutrin*.

The general turn of his verse is agreeable, his diction poetical and very proper to the subject and whatever faults there may be they are merely verbal and may very well be received under that good-natured allowance which Horace makes for those :

.....Quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

That which indeed to me seems most liable to an exception is that the gentleman has taken the liberty in some places to depart from his author and to substitute other persons and things in the room of those which he has left out or changed ; and that while he still retains the original story and keeps the scene at Paris, he makes use of the names of men and books in England unknown to and unthought of by Monsieur Boileau, and particularly in the battle of the books, where he makes use of some French and some English : I could have wished indeed they had all belonged to one nation ; for though the satire upon our own countrymen is very just and entertaining, yet I must always think the poem would have looked more of a piece if the names had been all as they are in the original, or that else, removing the action and scene entirely into England, the names of persons, places, etc. had been all English and so the whole had been rather an imitation than a translation of Boileau.

After all I am sensible that it may be easily enough replied in defence of the translation that as it is intended for English readers and more especially for those who don't understand French, a long bead-roll of dull French authors who are grown into such contempt that they are hardly known or even read in their own country, would be but an odd entertainment for people here who never heard of 'em before ; besides it must be allowed that one may very easily apprehend the pleasantry of the satire in the original by the translator's mustering up a set of English authors of equal degree and like kind of dulness with those mentioned by Monsieur Boileau.

As for the objection of his having changed the persons, I believe a subject of Great Britain may be very easily forgiven if the love of his country and the just honour which he has for his sovereign led him to apply those handsome compliments to the queen which the author makes to the king of France in some of the cantos, and in others, that of the prince of Condé to the Duke of Marlborough.

It is not the first time that justice has divested that monarch of honours which he has long assumed to himself, to place them more worthily upon his majesty; nor is it now only that his Grace has been adorned with the spoils of a French general. The praise is, I am sure, at least as highly deserved and as justly given by the English as the French poet. And indeed I think the whole translation to be so well done in the main and so entertaining that what little faults are in it, if there are any, ought not to be taken notice of for the sake of the beau-

ties. Nor had I taken the liberty to say what I have said of it, if it had not been to you a proof of an exact sincerity in everything where you ask my real opinion. I am, sir, your humble servant,

N. Rowe,
London, April 24, 1703.

Ozell's own views on translation and on Boileau are contained in his Dedication of *Le Lutrin* to the Right Honourable Charles Lord Halifax (that patron of letters who was, in Pope's phrase, "fed with dedications"): [1]

Your Lordship is not to be informed of the great reputation M. Boileau has acquired by all his works. They are esteemed so nice in themselves that it has been thought by some as rash an attempt to translate this French author as for an English general to attack an army of theirs. The late successes of some foreign campaigns have sufficiently proved that their heroes are not invincible, and the happy imitations of some of their best pieces that their writers are not incomparable. Not that I'm so vain as to imagine the following translation deserves to be mentioned in the same breath with some I could name. But certain it is the French genius may be matched (if not surpassed) in both the pen as well as the sword; ..... I have endeavoured, with the assistance of my friends, to do M. Boileau all possible justice in this celebrated piece of his, *Le Lutrin*; I hope I have used him with that civility which is due to one of the first figures in the commonwealth of learning; I was going to say with that generosity our countrymen treat his at Litchfield and Nottingham.

Nothing checks and deadens the fancy more than a too superstitious respect for the original, especially in poetry; it is commonly the cause that an idolatrous translation (as La Motte calls such an one) endeavouring too exactly to render all the beauties of his author, gives you in truth never a one. Every minute circumstance of a thought cannot be preserved with any tolerable grace, nor is it indeed necessary; provided the translator makes amends for his neglect of what is less important by improving and if possible by refining upon essentials, which is better done by studying the genius and copying the *tour* and *air* of an author than in adhering to a scrupulous detail of phrases, ever flat and disagreeable:

(Then follow more remarks on translation).

Monsieur Boileau calls this poem of his *heroi-comicus*, mock-heroic; that is, a ridiculous action made considerable in heroic verse. If I dis-

1. See Johnson: *Lives of the Poets*, "Halifax". Johnson adds: "For Tickell affirms that no dedication was unrewarded."

tinguish right there are two sorts of *burlesque*, the first where things of mean figure and slight concern appear in all the pomp and bustle of an epic poem; such is this of *Le Lutrin*. The second sort is where great events are made ridiculous by the meanness of the characters and the oddness of the numbers, such is the *Hudibras* of our excellent Butler.

Boileau, like Horace, was born equally for satire and for praise. *Le Lutrin* partakes of both. The satirical part, as 'tis very severe upon those of his own church, so I could wish it were applicable to the Romish clergy and none other.

As for the panegyrics so frequent in it, I know not why they should not as well become the queen of France as the French king, the Prince of Mindleheim as the Prince of Condé and the Atticus of Dr. Garth as the Aristus of Boileau.

On the last page of the third edition is this curiously-worded "Advertisement":

In justice to the memory of Mr. Cobb, late school-master of Christ's-Hospital, Mr. Ozell thinks himself obliged to own that that ingenious friend of his wrote many of the brightest lines in the preceding piece; part whereof was likewise done by Mr. Johnson: the rest, perhaps the dullest part as well as the greatest, was done by himself the said Ozell.

The execution of this translation is, on the whole — and in spite of Pope's sneer — good. It is smooth and has few lapses in good taste. In these respects it contrasts favourably with the early Restoration attempts at adaptation. Dryden and Garth had succeeded in showing even English hacks something of what irony and satire really mean. Ozell expands continually and translates freely. The first canto in French has two hundred and thirty-five lines, in English about three hundred and fifty. For example, the first eight lines of *Le Lutrin* become in Ozell twelve lines:

Arms and the man I sing whose martial soul
No toil could terrify, no fear control;
Active it urged his outward man to dare
The numerous hazards of a pious war;
Nor did the immortal prelate's labours cease,
Till victory had crowned 'em with success;
Till his gay eyes, sparkling with fluid fire,
Beheld the desk reflourish in the choir.
In vain the chanter and the chapter strove;
Twice they essayed the fatal desk to move.

As oft the prelate with unwearied pain
Fixed it to his proud rival's seat again. [1]

Notice the weak padding in the first four lines where Boileau plunges at once *in medias res* and strikes the true key of mock-heroic at once in the contrast between the heroic labours described in the first three verses and the utterly disproportionate result of these labours in the fourth line. Ozell has not caught the spirit of this contrast at all. " Beheld the desk reflourish in the choir ", is not so matter-of-fact as " Fit placer à la fin un lutrin dans le chœur ".

The description of the fat canons is well imitated :

Her lusty canons rosy beauties grace,
And brilliant health crimsons each ruddy face ;
Fattened with long and holy luxury,
Deep sunk in down, soft as their furs they lie ;
While there the sacred sluggards waste the day
In dull repose — by deputy they pray.
They only watched that they might relish rest,
And never fasted but to make a feast.
Unhealthy matins wisely they decline
And substitute a journey-man divine. [2]

The passage which Rowe compares so favourably with its original is as follows :

Deep in the covert of a dark alcove
Formed for the idle gods of sleep and love,

1. *Le Lutrin*, I, 1-8 :
Je chante les combats, et ce prélat terrible
Qui, par ses longs travaux et sa force invincible,
Dans une illustre église exerçant son grand cœur
Fit placer à la fin un lutrin dans le chœur.
C'est en vain que le chantre, abusant d'un faux titre,
Deux fois l'en fit ôter par les mains du chapitre ;
Ce prélat sur le banc de son rival altier
Deux fois le reportant, l'en couvrit tout entier.
2. *Le Lutrin*, I, 19-24 :
Ses chanoines vermeils et brillants de santé
S'engraissaient d'une longue et sainte oisiveté.
Sans sortir de leurs lits, plus doux que leurs hermines,
Ces pieux fainéants faisaient chanter matines,
Veillaient à bien dîner, et laissaient en leur lieu
A des chantres gagés le soin de louer Dieu.

A downy couch appears with wondrous care,
At great expense secured from noxious air;
Curtains in double folds around it run
And bar all entrance of the intruding sun;
Artfully raised to lull each softer sense
Devoted to the goddess indolence.
In idle riot there she keeps her court,
There airy visions, wanton phantoms sport;
Here negligently dreaming out the day,
Dissolved in ease the holy sluggard lay. [1]

The passage continues, heavy-handed and coarse compared with the original:

Strengthened with an immoderate morning meal,
The glutton battened till the dinner bell,
Youth in its flower blooming with vernal grace,
Shone in his eyes and brightened on his face.
His chin enormous overspread his chest,
In three deep folds descending on his breast;
There dozed the leaden lumps of slumbering fat,
While the pressed cushions groan beneath the weight.

Ozell preserves most of Boileau's brilliant antithetical lines, e. g.:

Et renonce au repos ou bien à l'évêché.

Renounce thy bishopric or thy repose.

The Virgilian simile in I, 85-88 [2] is expanded to nine lines, but quite in the classical manner:

So wounded by a wasp have I beheld
A sturdy bull, lord of the flowery field;
Unused to pain till then in amorous play,
He loved and ate and wantoned out the day.
But now impatient loves and feeds no more.
The neighbouring forests tremble at his roar;
With deep-fetched bellowings the noble beast
Exhales his spirits and torments his breast
At the vile insect that disturbs his rest.

1. *Le Lutrin*, I, 57 ff. Quoted above (p. 148) where comparison may be made with Crowne's treatment of the original.

2. Tel qu'on voit un taureau qu'une guêpe en furie
A piqué dans les flancs aux dépens de sa vie;
Le superbe animal, agité de tourments,
Exhale sa douleur en longs mugissements.

In Canto II, the speech of Sloth turns to the praise of Queen Anne, as La Mollesse's does to that of Louis XIV. This is absurd in the extreme as the scene of the poem is laid in Paris in the translation as well as in the original. The praise of Condé turns to that of Marlborough.

Ozell adds to the invocation in Canto IV (vs. 53 ff.) the following, referring to Garth :

> And thou who painted in a deathless strain
> The licensed homicides of Warwick Lane!
> (Phoebus to thee his double blessing gives;
> Thy music charms us and thy art relieves).
> Give energy to my enervate tongue
> While the fixed Chanter's flagrant rage is sung.

In Canto IV, vs. 145-52, Louis' exploits are replaced by those of Queen Anne.

In Ozell's rendering of the " battle of the books " (Canto V), French and English authors are hopelessly intermingled. This is less surprising in view of the fact that most seventeenth-century French works had been translated into English (especially the heroic romances) and had become almost English books. Some of the passages of this incident follow :

> Here crafty Bibliopole all authors sells ;
> .....
> Here Dryden, next him Ogilby is laid,
> While Boyle and B—ly blended, well accord,
> And Rowe and Settle grace one common board.[1]

> Here tuneful Waller on the pavement lay,
> And near him Quarles once more beheld the day ;
> Here Aristotle flew, Descartes there ;
> The heroes met and jostled in mid-air.
> Numberless books appeared this mighty hour
> Which scarce were seen or even known before.
> Here Parthenissa and Cassandra flew ;
> Romantic weight did real strength subdue.
> John Dunton too was seen, a wondrous sight!
> To dust retired, revisiting the light ;

1. *Le Lutrin*, V, 108 ff :

> Barbin vend aux passants des auteurs à tout prix.
> .....

And towering the dead author took his flight.
.....
Some luckless hand a Beaumont's Psyche throws
At Clotho's head and smote him 'twixt the brows.
.....
Clelia waged Amazonian war around
And bore down many a hero to the ground.
.....[1]

Mrs Aphra Behn takes the place of Quinault in the line (V, 192):

Fais voler ce Quinault qui me reste à la main.

Here at his head fair Afra's works let fly;
And may they prove as killing as her eye!

Ozell's version at once became the standard one; its popularity is shown by the numerous editions that appeared during the eighteenth century; it was reprinted in the complete translation of Boileau's *Works* (1711-13); a separate edition came out in 1714; and a fourth appeared at Glasgow from the Foulis Press in 1752. The variants in these different editions are slight. On the whole, it may be admitted that the translation deserved this success, though Ozell would probably have been unable to transfuse Boileau's spirit into English so well, had Garth not shown him how to do it.[2]

1. *Le Lutrin*, V, 149 ff.:

Là, près d'un Guarini Térence tombe à terre;
Là, Xénophon dans l'air heurte contre un La Serre.
Oh! que d'écrits obscurs, de livres ignorés,
Furent en ce grand jour de la poudre tirés!
Vous en fûtes tirés, Almerinde et Simandre;
Et toi, rebut d'un peuple, inconnu Caloandre,
Dans ton repos, dit-on, saisi par Gaillerbois,
Tu vis le jour alors pour la première fois,
Chaque coup sur la chair laisse une meurtrissure;
Déjà plus d'un guerrier se plaint d'une blessure.
D'un Le Vayer épais Giraut est renversé:
Marineau, d'un Brébeuf à l'épaule blessé,
En sent par tout le bras une douleur amère.

2. The latter part of Swift's *Battle of the Books* (which is a true mock-heroic in prose) may have been, as Warton thinks, suggested by the battle in *Le Lutrin*, Canto V. But the difference is obvious; in Swift the books are animated, and really fight with each other (in other words, the whole story is an allegory); in Boileau, the books are simply missiles in the hands of real human beings whose dispute has nothing literary about it. Why Swift makes Boileau a leader of the moderns ("The light-horse were commanded by Cowley and Despréaux") has never been satisfactorily explained.

D. THE TRANSLATION OF BOILEAU'S COMPLETE WORKS

The work of introducing Boileau to the English reader was crowned in the years immediately following his death — 1711, 1712 and 1713 — by the appearance of a translation of Boileau's complete works into English. Vol. II of the complete translation was the first to be published — Vol. I being probably delayed by the necessity of waiting for Desmaizeaux's *Life of Boileau* which was not finished until the end of November, 1711.[1] Vol. II contains Ozell's Dedication of the whole translation to Lord Halifax, the Epistles, the Odes and other Miscellaneous Verse, Longinus on the Sublime, Critical Reflections on Longinus, Letters, Discourses on Satire, the Burlesque Decree, The Dialogue of the Dead, and other Miscellanies. Vol. I appeared in 1712, containing the Life of Boileau by Desmaizeaux, Boileau's Preface to the Paris 1701 edition, the Lutrin (with a separate title-page dated 1711) with the Prefaces and Dedications of the 1708 edition, the Art of Poetry, the Satires and Sappho's Lesbian Ode in the paraphrases of Catullus, Philips, Boileau and an anonymous " Lady ". Vol. III, a slenderer book, appeared in 1713, containing " The Posthumous Works of Monsieur Boileau ". These include (after the dedication to Halifax and the Preface) Valincour's speech to the French Academy, at the reception of Monsieur l'abbé d'Estrées, upon the death of M. Boileau ; Advertisement concerning M. Boileau's Tenth Reflection on Longinus, supposed to be written by the abbot Renaudot ; the Satire against Equivocation, Huet and Le Clerc's Dissertation against M. Boileau about the passage in Genesis, chap. I, vs. 3 : " And God said, Let there be Light and there was Light " : Three New Reflections on Longinus, A Discourse upon the Style of Inscriptions ; Seventeen new Epigrams ; Advertisement concerning an Opera ; A Letter to Monsieur Le Verrier ; Ditto to M. Racine ; The Heroes of Romance ; Appendix ; Remarks on Boileau's Tenth Reflection on Longinus by M. Le Clerc. Each volume is adorned with an engraved frontispiece, that in Vol. I representing Boileau with these verses below :

> His rhyme unforced attends to reason's call,
> Still imitating, still original ;

1. It is dated " London, November 24, 1711 ", in the English translation, v. I, p. clxviii.

Learned, sublime and gay in all he writes,
He Persius, Horace, Juvenal unites.

These are a translation of the verses found under the portrait of Boileau which figures as the frontispiece of the Billiot edition (Paris, 1713) :

Au joug de la raison asservissant la rime,
Et, même en imitant, toujours original ;
J'ai su, dans mes écrits, docte, enjoué, sublime,
Rassembler en moi Perse, Horace et Juvenal.

(Had these verses appeared in an earlier edition of Boileau?). At the head of each canto of *The Lutrin* there is an engraving representing an important scene in the action. There is an index for Vols. I and II at the end of Vol. II.

Part of Ozell's Dedication to Lord Halifax, explaining the inception of the work, has already been quoted in Book I.[1] After speaking of the bookseller's " resolution to get all the other works of that celebrated author translated ", he continues : " which being too great a task for one person to perform within any reasonable time they procured several hands to undertake it.

As to the poetical volume, I presume to say, that though but a small part of it is of my own composing, there is hardly a line of it which I did not either find conformable to the author's sense or which I did not make so.

.....

You will, my Lord, find in this translation some pieces of M. Boileau which have never appeared in any edition of his works and which may possibly be new to your Lordship. "

The title-page of Vol. I states that there is prefixed to the translation of Boileau's Works " His Life, written to Joseph Addison, Esq., by DesMaizeaux, and some account of this translation by N. Rowe, Esq. " By Rowe's account is apparently meant the account he had prefixed to Ozell's translation of *Le Lutrin* in 1708, and which is reprinted with that translation in the complete works. The " Life " is stated to have been " written in French by M. DesMaizeaux[2], made into English from the manuscript

1. See p. 30.

2. Pierre Desmaizeaux (or Desmaiseaux) was one of the numerous French Protestant refugees who settled in England after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and who did so much to establish intellectual intercourse between England and France in the early part of the eighteenth century. The date of

copy by Mr. Ozell." In fact, as we shall presently find DesMaizeaux telling us, the "Life" was expressly composed for this translation. It appeared in its original French the following year in Amsterdam,[1] and became the standard biography of Boileau. The "Life" is preceded by a letter, from DesMaizeaux to Addison, from which the opening sentences bearing on the demand for a translation of all Boileau's works, have already been quoted in Book I.[2] DesMaizeaux proceeds with the following remarks on the inclusion of Boileau's biography in the work:

When we are delighted with the composition of an author, good-nature prompts us still further to an inquiry into the passages and circumstances of his life. The persons therefore concerned in this translation of his works have prevailed upon me to undertake the compiling of some Memoirs on that subject; and I was the more easily induced to comply with this request, because I knew the esteem you had for that great man and hoped you would pardon me the artifice of covering my own presumption with, what I knew would be welcome to you, anything that is done in honour of M. Despréaux.

his birth is quite uncertain, but is generally placed about 1673. He was born at Paillat in Auvergne, the son of a reformed minister, who on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, went to Switzerland. Bayle gave him an introduction to Shaftesbury, with whom he came to England in 1699. Through Shaftesbury he became known to Halifax and to Addison. He employed himself at literary hack-work. In 1720 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. He died in 1745. For further data on his life and works, cf. the articles "Desmaizeaux" in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, the *Grande Encyclopédie*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *La France Protestante* (ed. Haag, Paris, 1846–58), v. IV, p. 247, Chalmers' edition of the *Biographical Dictionary*, XI, 534, Moréri's *Dictionary* (1759), IV, 125, Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, V, 546, 573, IX, 619, D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, 378–82, Joseph Texte's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et le Cosmopolitisme littéraire au XVIII^e siècle*. Desmaizeaux's enormous correspondence has never yet been edited and lies in manuscript in the British Museum and the Royal Library in Copenhagen. [See also Bastide, *Anglais et Français du XVII^e siècle*, pp. 221, 223, 236 sq., 341, 342, 353.]

1. *La Vie de Monsieur Boileau Despréaux*, par M. Desmaizeaux, Amsterdam, chez Henri Schelte, 1712. It also bears the dedication to Addison. See T. F. Crane's edition of *Les Héros de Roman* (Boston, 1902), Introduction, p. 1. The English translation is slightly reduced in bulk from the original by omissions, sometimes slight, sometimes considerable. For instance, the account of the quarrel between Racine and Boileau on the one hand, and Pradon, on the other, over the latter's *Phèdre*; that of Boileau's *éloge* of Cassandre's translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; the lines from the "épisode de l'horlogère" which appeared in the 1674–75 editions of *Le Lutrin*, and the account of Fontenelle's parody on the *Ode sur Namur*, are omitted in the translation.

2. See p. 31.

It is a pleasure that when I acknowledge the many obligations I have to you I can, at the same time, entertain you with the account of an illustrious person who was known to you abroad and added, by his conversation, to the admiration you had for him from his writings. And as these memoirs concern a stranger whose name is familiar to more than his own nation, I thought it proper to put them under the protection of one whose fate is the same with his in that circumstance. The judicious remarks which you made in your travels and with which you have obliged the public have been honourably mentioned by the most learned of both nations, and justly gained you the reputation of one of the most polite and judicious writers of the age.

As to the present Memoirs : the life of a man of wit and learning, which is spent most suitably to that character, in a plain and uniform manner, cannot be expected to produce great and surprising events ; but to the learned and intelligent part of mankind it will be as grateful an entertainment to know the little incidents that gave occasion to such a composition ; that explain such an allusion ; and heighten the humour of such a satirical line ; each of which, without this information, would have lost a greater part of their force and beauty.

I shall think my time very well spent, if you are of opinion that I have done any service of this kind to Monsieur Despréaux.

M.

The Life occupies one hundred and sixty-eight pages, and is interesting as one of the earliest detailed biographies of a man of letters. There has been considerable discrepancy of opinion as to its merits. Warburton speaks very unfavourably of it in a letter to Birch : " Almost all the Life-writers we have had, before Toland and DesMaizeaux, are indeed strange insipid creatures ; and yet I had rather read the worst of them than be obliged to go through with this of Milton's or the other's Life of Boileau, where there is such a dull, heavy succession of long quotations of uninteresting passages that it makes their method quite nauseous. But the verbose, tasteless Frenchman seems to lay it down as principle that every life must be a book ; and what is worse, it seems a book without a life ; for what do we know of Boileau after all this tedious stuff ? " [1] On the other hand, a modern scholar like T. F. Crane says : " It is an excellent life of Boileau and history of his works, and has furnished later biographers with much of their material. " [2] My own opinion is, that, though judged as biography,

1. See Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, v. V, pp. 545-6.

2. T. F. Crane's edition of *Les Héros de Roman* (Boston, 1902), Introd., p. 1.

it may not, as Warburton complains, add much to the knowledge of the man, it serves admirably well its purpose as an introduction to his works for foreign readers. It describes clearly the literary scene in which Boileau played his rôle as satirist, it sketches in the political, military and religious background and it gives copious illustrative passages from the less accessible prefaces to the early editions of Boileau's works, from letters and from his poems. It ends with a very just and sensible portrait of Boileau as man and poet. It possibly errs in a too generous sprinkling of quotations but any one interested in Boileau must simply give a categorical negative to Warburton's characterization of these passages as " uninteresting ". The Protestant in Des Maizeaux comes out — but not immoderately — in a passage like the following where he is discussing the *Lutrin* (p. xlix) : " 'Tis certain that, as it is a very ticklish subject, so Monsieur Despréaux did not dwell long upon it ; nor could he indeed have said so much as he did without the help of fiction and the esteem he was in at Court. How much soever an Author may be in the right, he must not expect impunity in France, if he attacks the excesses and irregularity of the clergy. That would be the worst of all heresies ; and you have doubtless, sir, taken notice, that our illustrious author has kept a profound silence upon that particular in his other works. We are not therefore to be surprised, if even in the *Lutrin* he has so slightly touched upon that sore. I know not whether Monsieur la Bruyère had not an eye to this, when he says: 'A man that is born a Christian and a Frenchman finds himself constrained in the writing of satire ; the great subjects are forbid him ; he sometimes enters upon them, but afterwards diverts to little matters, which he heightens by the beauty of his genius and style.' " The religious preoccupations of the writer appear also (pp. cxii-cxiii) in his discussion of the Epistle on the Love of God. [1]

After the Life, come, in the order given, the *Lutrin*, the *Art of Poetry* and the *Satires*.

The translation of *Le Lutrin* is simply a second edition (with only trifling changes) of Ozell's translation first published in 1708, and examined above. The version of *L'Art Poétique* is a *rifacimento* of Soame's translation. It evidently appeared for the first time in this translation of Boileau's complete works ; but a second edition of it was published separately in 1715, which indicates that

1. For further quotation from " The Life ", see Book I, p. 31.

it superseded Soame's original version. In the separate 1715 edition, the name of the translator is not given, but at the end of the translation in Vol. I of the complete works, is the following note which makes it clear that it is to be assigned to Ozell himself :

N. B. The booksellers being informed that though Sir William Soame's translation of the preceding poem was, in the general, very well done; yet that it was capable of many amendments, not only in the versification but the sense, they procured it to be compared with the original and corrected as it now stands, with some modern applications, by the gentleman who was principally concerned in the version of the *Lutrin* and who has lately published an excellent translation of the *Secchia Rapita*, or the Trophy-Bucket, an Italian poem, the first of the mock-heroic kind and which was the foundation of the *Lutrin*, according to Mr. Dryden's judgment, who gives the full account of it in his Discourse on the Original and Progress of Satire.

The 1715 edition of Ozell's translation contains the following " Advertisement " :

Though Sir William Soame's translation of the following poem was in several places very well done ; yet the diction of poetry has been so much improved since his time, that upon strictly comparing the piece with the original, it has been found capable of many amendments, not only in the versification but the sense.

In this edition are likewise inserted classical references and some curious explanatory notes, taken from the last Paris copy of our author's works, published since his death by the famous Mr. Renaudot.

Examination shows — what these Advertisements would lead us to expect — that Ozell's translation keeps pretty close to Soame's with occasional modifications intended to improve the harmony of the line and to correct bad rhymes.

In certain passages the names of the English poets substituted by Dryden for French ones, are replaced again by more recent English poets : Canto I, l. 17 ff : (Soame) :

> Waller a hero's mighty acts extol,
> Spenser sing Rosalind in pastoral.
>
> (Ozell) :
>
> Prior a hero's mighty acts extol,
> Congreve with comedy and pastoral.

This emphasizes the conception of a translation as something that ought to have an *intérêt d'actualité* in the country for which it is translated.

It is in the translation of the passage on Burlesque, however, that the most significant changes have been made from Soame. Here are Ozell's lines:

> The lewdest scribblers some admirers found,
> And our *Mock Virgil* was a while renowned:
> .....
> For wit and nature had a just regard
> And left the country to admire *Ned Ward*.
> .....
> But learn from Garth the true satiric grace.*

The replacing of *Mock-Tempest* by *Mock-Virgil* and of *Mac-Flecknoe* by Ned Ward is of no particular significance, but hardly too great importance can be attached to the substitution of Garth for Butler and of " satiric " for " buffooning " in the last line. It means that by that time the triumph of mock-heroic over burlesque was complete and that the true meaning of Boileau's attack on burlesque was understood. [1]

As pointed out above [2], some changes are made in the passage sketching the history of English poetry; Chaucer replaces Fairfax, corresponding historically better to Villon, but not illustrating Boileau's point as well as Fairfax.

Thus, Boileau's *Art Poétique* was taken up by two literary generations in England, who, availing themselves of the latitude allowed to translators by the theories of their time, used it as a basis for writing commentaries on the English literature of the previous and contemporary periods. [3]

The Satires (except those which are taken with a few changes from Oldham) are probably mainly Ozell's work. Most of them display the characteristics now familiar to us in the translators of Boileau; a tendency to expand the original and to find English parallels for French names and incidents.

1. See p. 129.
2. See p. 131.
3. After these examinations of Ozell's translations of the *Art Poétique* and of *Le Lutrin*, it seems to me we may justly come to the conclusion that the writers in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in Chalmers' *Dictionary* underrate Ozell's ability to do justice to his original. He is generally pretty faithful to his author and where he modifies his letter he remains consistent with his spirit. His versification, though not so smooth as Boileau's, is sufficiently vigorous and it is to be remembered that when Ozell wrote, Pope had not yet polished the English couplet to the highest brilliancy.

The first Satire has one hundred and sixty-four lines in French, two hundred in English. The following rendering of lines 113-128 of Boileau has a curious introduction of English names into a satire on the city of Paris (for such it remains in the translation) :

> Shall I hereafter act another part,
> Phoebus abandon for Bartholu's art,
> Turn o'er the Institutes, thumb Littleton ?
> .....
> E'er I a thought like this can entertain
> Frost shall at Midsummer congeal the Seine;
> His Holiness shall turn a Protestant,
> Burgess wear lawn, and Atterbury cant. [1]

Satire II is entirely independent of Butler's earlier translation of the same satire which has been examined above. But the most preposterous example we have yet seen of the substitution of English for French names is to be found in this Satire which, unlike Butler's, retains the dedication to Molière. Lines 17-20 of Boileau :

> Si je veux d'un galant dépeindre la figure
> Ma plume pour rimer trouve l'abbé de Pure.
> Si je pense exprimer un auteur sans défaut
> La raison dit Virgile et la rime Quinault,

are rendered by the following :

> Am I to paint an humble priest or show
> A just example of a well-dressed beau,
> Purely for sake of prosody and tag,
> I put Sacheverell and Captain Rag.
> Quote I an author for the first degree ?
> Reason's for Dryden and the rhyme for Lee.

1. Satire I, 113-128 :

> Faut-il donc désormais jouer un nouveau rôle ?
> Dois-je, las d'Apollon, recourir à Barthole !
> Et feuilletant Louet allongé par Brodeau ;
> D'une robe à longs plis balayer le barreau ?
> Mais à ce seul penser je sens que je m'égare.
> Moi ! que j'aille crier dans ce pays barbare,
> .....
> Avant qu'un tel dessein m'entre dans la pensée,
> On pourra voir la Seine à la Saint-Jean glacée,
> Arnauld à Charenton devenir huguenot,
> Saint-Sorlin janséniste, et Saint-Pavin bigot.

The translation of Boileau, vs. 37 ff. is interesting as giving analogous English " froides épithètes " :

If I begin, *Oh nymph of grace divine,*
I soon can add, *that does all nymphs outshine.*
If I praise *Phyllis* for a *thousand charms*
The next verse tells how *she each swain alarms.*
When I'm to talk of *Celia's sparkling eyes,*
Shall I not think of *stars and glittering skies?*
Celia, Heaven's *masterpiece divinely fair,*
The rhyme makes *Celia still beyond compare.*[1]

Line 46 :

Dans mes vers recousus mettre en pièces Malherbe,

becomes :

All Waller I might make my own with ease,
And without genius steal him piece by piece.

Satire III (the *Festin ridicule*) is translated with much spirit and is one of the most successful English translations of Boileau. It is not indebted in any way to Buckingham's vulgar poem. As an example of the vivacity of the style, we may quote the following passage :

I saw my error now, but 'twas too late ;
So up I followed to the room of state ;
'Twas very hot as well as very high,
And bore the boiling of the summer sky ;
No shutter could defend our fine alcove,
Much hotter than a bath or burning stove ;
The cloth was laid in this delicious place :
Of all the company I knew no face,
Except two country boobies, nicely bred,
And in the learning of romances read.

1. Sat. II, 37 ff. :

Si je louais Philis, *en miracles féconde,*
Je trouverais bientôt *à nulle autre seconde* ;
Si je voulais vanter un objet *non pareil,*
Je mettrais à l'instant *plus beau que le soleil* ;
Enfin, parlant toujours d'*astres* et *de merveilles,*
De *chefs-d'œuvre des cieux*, de *beautés sans pareilles*
.....

A cock in splendid equipage appears;
His state, his title changed; a new he bears;
The cock which used among the hens to crow,
Their host to honour is a capon now. [1]

Satire V bears the rubric, "Done by Mr. Oldham, Corrected and Completed from the Original."

Dangeau's name is introduced in this translation wherever it occurs in the original and the final passage, addressed to Dangeau, which is omitted in Oldham, is restored in its entirety. An attempt is made generally to stick closer to the original than in Oldham. The changes, however, are mainly verbal, or, sometimes, for the sake of improving the rhyme, about which, as we have seen before, poets are much more scrupulous after 1700. For example, Oldham's verses:

But squanders life and sleeps away his days,
Dissolved in sloth, and steeped in sensual ease,

become

But squanders life and sleeps away his days,
Dissolved in sloth, and negligent of praise. [2]

Satire VIII bears a similar rubric to Satire V: "Imitated by Mr. Oldham, in the year 1682. Compared and Corrected, from the Original, by Mr. Ozell". The changes from Oldham are not many or important.

The following lines from the translation of Satire IX, are a good example of Ozell at his best:

1. Sat. III, 37-48:

A ces mots, mais trop tard, reconnaissant ma faute,
Je le suis en tremblant dans une chambre haute,
Où, malgré les volets, le soleil irrité
Formait un poêle ardent au milieu de l'été.
Le couvert était mis dans ce lieu de plaisance,
Où j'ai trouvé d'abord, pour toute connaissance,
Deux nobles campagnards, grands liseurs de romans,
Qui m'ont dit tout Cyrus dans leurs longs compliments,
J'enrageais. Cependant on apporte un potage,
Un coq y paraissait en pompeux équipage,
Qui changeant sur ce plat et d'état et de nom,
Par tous les conviés s'est appelé chapon.

2. Sat. V, 19-20:

Et, n'ayant rien de grand qu'une sotte fierté,
S'endort dans une lâche et molle oisiveté.

Or waiting on your flocks in town relate
How hapless Damon died for Sylvia's hate ;
Or tune your oaten reed at Temple Bar,
And in your closet tell the woods your care.
Or warmed with generous draughts of Tuscan wine,
For Amarillis in an eclogue whine.
Or in cold couplets, careless of the fair,
Sigh for some cool Chloris in the air ;
Compare her to the morn or radiant day,
And while with living well you're plump and gay,
Sicken in simile and pine away. [1]

At the end of Satire XI, at the bottom of the page, is this note : " This is the last of M. Boileau's Satires. We shall not take any notice of the Dutch ribaldry imposed upon him, but only endeavour to give the public a just translation of his genuine works, as we find 'em in the best Paris edition. " The note reveals the fact that the poems which had been circulating in Paris under Boileau's name were known in England, and scorned by his admirers there, too. The satire On Equivocation, now included in " the best Paris edition " as No. XII, appeared in Vol. III.

After the numerous examples of the quality of the English translations of Boileau that have been given, it is unnecessary to quote copiously from those of the other works contained in Vols. II and III.

The same style of translation of which we have formed some idea, in examining the Satires, is found in the rendering of the Epistles. Only Epistle IX calls for special comment. It is inscribed in the original to the Marquis de Seignelay, in the translation to " The Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor Cowper. " Cowper is substituted for de Seignelay throughout the poem wherever the latter's name appears in the original, and England becomes the scene of the action instead of France. As an example, take the rendering of vs. 21 ff. of Boileau :

1. Sat. IX, 257-264 :
Viendrai-je en une églogue, entouré de troupeaux,
Au milieu de Paris enfler mes chalumeaux,
Et, dans mon cabinet assis au pied des hêtres,
Faire dire aux échos des sottises champêtres ?
Faudra-t-il de sens froid et sans être amoureux,
Pour quelque Iris en l'air faire le langoureux,
Lui prodiguer les noms de Soleil et d'Aurore,
Et, toujours bien mangeant, mourir par métaphore ?

Thus the French poets in a pompous strain
May talk of Tesse's victories in Spain,
Of Villeroy's mighty conquests and Anjou's,
And Leak retreating from the bold Toulouse.

.....

As if some wretched author should pretend
Your deeds of arms and triumphs to commend,
Instead of painting your unwearied zeal
For Anna's service and your country's weal,
Your wisdom, vigilance and solid sense,
Your equity and charming eloquence,
Your learning and your love of arts, suppose,
Like Mars, he drew you driving on your foes

.....

Instead of making you as good as great
A true Maecenas in the British state,
Shou'd he a lab'ring Hercules design,
You'd cry, the picture's Marlbro's and not mine. [1]

The Ode on the Taking of Namur is " made English by Samuel Cobb, M. A., late of Trinity College, Cambridge. " It is in the style of Cowley's Pindaric Odes. It is Boileau in a diluted form.

All the Prose documents of Boileau are pretty literally translated.

On p. 236 we read : " Some Genuine Pieces written by Monsr. Boileau, never yet printed in any edition of his Works. " These, which follow, are three : A Dialogue of the Dead ; A Letter from Monsr. Boileau to M. de Maucroix ; and M. de Maucroix's Answer to the Foregoing Letter. The last two pieces need not detain us ;

1. Epître IX, 21 ff. :

Va louer Monterey d'Oudenarde forcé,
Ou vante aux électeurs Turenne repoussé.
Tout éloge imposteur blesse une âme sincère.
Si, pour faire sa cour à ton illustre père,
Seignelay, quelque auteur, d'un faux zèle emporté,
Au lieu de peindre en lui la noble activité,
La solide vertu, la vaste intelligence,
Le zèle pour son roi, l'ardeur, la vigilance,
La constante équité, l'amour pour les beaux-arts,
Lui donnait les vertus d'Alexandre ou de Mars,
Et, pouvant justement l'égaler à Mécène,
Le comparait au fils de Pélée ou d'Alcmène,
Ses yeux, d'un tel discours faiblement éblouis,
Bientôt dans ce tableau reconnaîtraient Louis.

but the first is of considerable interest. It marks the first appearance of the original sketch of the "Héros de Roman" in company with Boileau's other works.[1] The authentic *Héros de Roman* appeared for the first time in the 1713 Paris edition of E. Billiot. The fact that the spurious *Dialogue* appears in Vol. II of the translation (1711) is good evidence of the avidity with which any work connected with Boileau's name was sought after by the English literary men of the time.

Vol. III appeared in 1713, containing the posthumous works which appeared in the same year in Paris for the first time in the Billiot edition. They are dedicated to Lord Halifax. The Preface is worth quoting in its entirety.

The public having some time since received the two former volumes of Monsieur Boileau's Works, and by their approbation of them given sufficient encouragement for us to proceed, we thought we could not do better than to translate these pieces which appear in the new Paris edition except the Satire upon Equivocation which the French king would not suffer to be inserted.

As every, even the minutest piece of this poet is valuable, so they very well deserve to be recommended to men of taste and letters who have any inclination to see those beauties in English which have been so much admired in French.

To speak in order of the parts which compose this volume. *The Satire upon Equivocation* is writ with as much spirit as any of his youthful pieces and provoked a considerable party of his own religion; and though he has given as little quarter to the reformer, yet the jealous temper of the Romanists would not allow a work wherein their enemies and themselves are promiscuously condemned to appear under M. Boileau's name. It cannot be expected that a satire which runs so much upon argument should be so generally pleasing as those which turn upon the common vices of mankind and are pointed with personal reflections.

There are some epigrams, letters, etc., which have the agreeable turn peculiar to this author and serve to lead the reader into some part of the history of his writings.

But the most considerable part (and which never appeared complete

1. See above, Book II, pp. 126–27. For further details of the *Dialogue des Morts*, see T. F. Crane's edition of the *Héros de Roman* (Boston, 1902), especially chapter III, Introduction (pp. 33–44) and Appendix I, p. 249, where the spurious dialogue in its French form is reprinted from the copy in the British Museum. See also the *Life of Boileau* by Des Maizeaux, in Vol. 1 of this translation, pp. xxxiii–xxxv.

before) is the *Dialogue after the manner of Lucian*; this piece was composed in our author's younger years and is full of spirit and vivacity, the satire just and strong and the raillery delicate and artful. There is nothing that ever appeared in imitation of Lucian that comes so near that excellent original : and as it lay by the author a considerable time, no doubt he took frequent opportunities of revising and improving its beauties, so that we may reckon it one of his most finished pieces.

The remainder consists of a critical dispute between our author, M. Huet bishop of Avranche and M. Le Clerc occasioned by this passage in Genesis : And God said, Let there be light and there was light. Chap. I, verse 3. It is easy to see where the advantage in the controversy lies and how far superior the poetical critic is, either to the divine or philologist; they have indeed fell off from their purpose and granted all that M. Boileau contended for, the sublime of the idea, and yet go on to abuse him, as if he could not distinguish between the thought and the phrase. But the Paris answerer is more absurd than the rest and after he has heaped abundance of personal reflections on our author will not allow him the name of poet. Such an adversary is not worth contending with, and he exposes his own judgment much more than he can prejudice the character of M. Boileau, who will ever be reckoned the best of modern poets at least, if not superior to most ancients, who wrote in the same way.

There is no need for us to be detained by a verbal examination of the works contained in Vol. III.

Two other editions at least of this translation of Boileau's works were published in the 18th century, in 1736 and 1752.

Our examination of the translation (under Ozell's direction and probably mainly by his own hand) of Boileau's complete works will have made three things clear : first, that there was at that time in England a keen interest, even among people who did not read French in the original, in any work, no matter how small, coming from Boileau's hands ; second, that Ozell's qualities as a translator and as a poet are much higher than they have been represented to be and were quite adequate to the task of presenting Boileau favourably in English garb ; and third, that the habit was common of adapting Boileau's literary satire to English conditions and of substituting English butts for his French ones.

CHAPTER III

POPE AND YOUNG

By the year 1711, Boileau's manner and thought had been pretty thoroughly naturalized in England. After a long period of fumbling with a sort of hybrid burlesque, a real mock-heroic in the Boileau style had emerged in *The Dispensary*; it was immensely popular and produced quite a progeny of imitations during the first decade of the century. The *Art Poétique* had been adapted to English uses by Soame, Mulgrave and Roscommon. A mob of gentlemen who wrote, if not with ease, yet with fluency, had imitated Boileau's minor works, particularly his Satires and Epistles. But even the best of these works (with the exception of *MacFlecknoe*, which is but a fragment and occupies a somewhat isolated position) were mediocre; their influence might never have succeeded in making the Bolevian manner dominant over more traditional styles; what was lacking was some work in the new style bearing the stamp of genius. In 1711 that work appeared in the form of Pope's *Essay on Criticism*.

That celebrated poem and its successors (*The Rape of the Lock*, *The Dunciad*, *The Moral Essays* and the *Imitations of Horace*) were so superior to all the other poetical productions of the time that their style and the *genres* to which they belonged (the treatise in verse, the mock-heroic, the satire and the epistle) practically drove all other kinds of poetry from the field. The man whose genius achieved this result and whose indebtedness to Boileau escaped none of his contemporaries, soon came to be known as " the English Boileau ". Exactly what this phrase connoted to Pope's contemporaries is not easy to determine. If they meant that the essence of the two men's poetry is the same they were worse critics than they have the reputation of being; for in character and in imaginative endowment no two men could have been further apart than Boileau and Pope. In manliness, generosity and good taste Boileau was as far above Pope as he was beneath him in passion and

imagination. On the other hand, the phrase is justified if it means that Pope carried the *genres* that the earlier imitators of Boileau had imported into England up to and, in some cases, even beyond the level of excellence set by Boileau himself. In part of this work (verse-satire) Pope was anticipated by Edward Young whose satires will be considered in this chapter in connection with Pope's literary career.

In so far as the influence of Boileau on Pope and Young is of a general character connected with the evolution of English poetic style that followed the introduction of Boileau's works into England, it will be studied in the chapter on " Boileau's Influence on English Poetry " in Book IV. Here we shall confine ourselves to determining to what extent Pope or Young borrowed definite conceptions or poetical frame-works or individual passages from Boileau in specific poems like the *Essay on Criticism*, the *Rape of the Lock*, the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, etc.

The dangers of this kind of investigation have been recognized in the Introductory Chapter of this Book ; and nowhere are they more obvious than when one is dealing with a man of genius like Pope. On the other hand, the counterbalancing knowledge that plagiarism was, under proper conditions, a literary virtue during the neo-classic dispensation is particularly potent when one is dealing with Pope ; for, by his own admission, and by the testimony of his contemporaries, he was particularly addicted to Molière's practice of taking his own property wherever he found it. This he justified to Spence as follows : " My first taking to imitating was not out of vanity, but humility. I saw how defective my own things were, and I endeavoured to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others."[1] All his eighteenth-century commentators point out copious borrowings from Boileau in his works, and a writer in *The British Magazine* for April, 1765, says plumply (in the course of a discussion on plagiarism) : " The most licentious in his liberties with the thoughts and expressions of others is the celebrated Mr. Pope. There is scarce an author to whom he has not, at some time or other, been abundantly obliged. "[2]

Of all Pope's poems we would expect the *Essay on Criticism* (one of his earliest) to be most open to this charge of plagiarism.

1. Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 278.
2. *Op. cit.*, v. VI, p. 194.

In fact such a mature work from the pen of a youth of twenty would be inexplicable except on the ground that he drew liberally from outside sources. The closing passage of the poem suggests where we might look for Pope's material; he gives a brief sketch of the history of criticism from Aristotle to his own day, and singles out for special mention, among the moderns, Vida, Boileau, Roscommon, Mulgrave and Walsh; and it is possible to discover in his *Essay* borrowings from all these men (as well as from Horace and Longinus). The general scheme of the poem has no resemblance to that of the *Art Poétique*; for Pope's work, on the whole, lives up to its title, which states that it is an essay (that is, a tentative effort) at outlining the principles a good *critic* ought to follow, *not* a Poetic Art for the *poet*. It is not, therefore, an "imitation" of the *Art Poétique*. But it borrows several ideas and expressions from Boileau and may therefore be considered here. The general critical attitude and the particular variety of didactic temper which pervade it I believe to have been learned from Boileau, but those subjects, though they may be touched upon here, will be treated more fully later.[1]

In some places Pope seems to borrow directly from Boileau and at other times to borrow from Soame's translation of the *Art Poétique*. As we have seen above, Pope's knowledge of French was not very good[2]; this may be a reason why he did not refuse the aid of Soame on occasion; but an equally good reason might be that Soame's translation had itself acquired such an important place as an independent English *Art of Poetry* that Pope might consult both it and Boileau's work as if they were almost entirely independent productions. At all events, it is clear from the *Essay* and Pope's other works that he read all of Boileau, either in the original or in a translation.

The lines:

> First follow nature, and your judgement frame
> By her just standard, which is still the same.
> Unerring nature, still divinely bright,
> One clear, unchanged and universal light,
> *Life, force and beauty, must to all impart,*
> At once the source and end and test of art,

1. Some of the following instances of Pope's borrowings were called to my attention by Dr. P. R. Lieder.

2. See above, p. 32.

though " nature " is substituted for " reason ", are based not merely for their idea but for their very expression ultimately on Boileau's *Art Poétique*:

> Aimez donc la raison ; que toujours vos écrits
> Empruntent d'elle seule et leur lustre et leur prix,

for the fifth line is simply a re-arrangement of the last line in the couplet by which Soame translates this passage from Boileau :

> Love reason then, and let whate'er you write
> *Borrow from her its beauty, force and light.*

Similarly, lines 119-121 :

> Know well each ancient's proper character ;
> His fable, subject, scope in every page ;
> Religion, country, genius of his age,

come from Soame's :

> Keep to each man his proper character ;
> Of countries and of times the humours know,
> From different climates different customs grow,

which are a translation of the *Art Poétique*, III, 112-114 :

> Conservez à chacun son propre caractère.
> Des siècles, des pays, étudiez les mœurs,
> Les climats font souvent les diverses humeurs.

Lines 152-153:

> From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
> And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,

seem to be a combination of two passages from Soame :

> Her generous style at random oft will part,
> And by a brave disorder shows her art,

[*Art Poétique*, II, 71-72 (of the Ode) :

> Son style impétueux, souvent marche au hasard,
> Chez elle un beau désordre est un effet de l'art.]

and

> A generous muse may sometimes take her flight
> When too much fettered with the rules of art,
> May from her stricter bounds and limits part.

[*Art Poétique*, IV, 78-80 :

Quelquefois dans sa course un esprit vigoureux,
Trop resserré par l'art, sort des règles prescrites,
Et de l'art même apprend à franchir leurs limites.]

Lines 171-174 :

Some figures monstrous and mis-shaped appear,
Considered singly or beheld too near,
Which, but proportioned to their light or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace,

come from Soame's :

Each object must be fixed in the due place,
And differing parts have corresponding grace,

[*Art poétique*, I 177 ff. :

Il faut que chaque chose y soit mise en son lieu,
Que le début, la fin répondent au milieu ;
Que d'un art délicat les pièces assorties
N'y forment qu'un seul tout de diverses parties.]

Cf. *Essay*, 239-40 :

But in such lays as *neither ebb nor flow*,
Correctly cold and regularly low.

and Soame ;

A frozen style that *neither ebbs or flows*.

[*Art Poétique*, I, 71-72 :

Un style trop égal et toujours uniforme
En vain brille à nos yeux, il faut qu'il nous endorme].

So far Soame has been, quite clearly, Pope's immediate source rather than Boileau. But we now come to some passages which show that Pope read Boileau at first hand and extensively (not only the *Art Poétique*, but his prose as well).

The first of these passages is the one containing the principle of the whole poem :

True Wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

This is, of course, simply a paraphrase of the following passage from Boileau's Preface to the 1701 edition of his works : " Qu'est-ce qu'une pensée neuve, brillante, extraordinaire ? Ce n'est point, comme se le persuadent les ignorants, une pensée que personne n'a jamais eue, ni dû avoir. C'est au contraire une pensée qui a dû venir à tout le monde, et que quelqu'un s'avise le premier d'exprimer. Un bon mot n'est bon mot qu'en ce qu'il dit une chose que chacun pensait, et qu'il la dit d'une manière vive, fine et nouvelle. " [1]

The lines ridiculing facile rhymesters :

> Where'er you find " the cooling western breeze, "
> In the next line, it " whispers through the trees : "
> If crystal streams " with pleasing murmurs creep "
> The reader's threatened (not in vain) with " sleep, "

are suggested by Boileau, *Satire* II, 37 ff. :

> Si je louais Philis, " en miracles féconde, "
> Je trouverais bientôt " à nulle autre seconde ; "
> Si je voulais vanter un objet " non pareil; "
> Je mettrais à l'instant " plus beau que le soleil, " etc.

Warton points out that the lines 458-9 :

> Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,
> In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus,

are modelled on Boileau's *Epistle* VII, vs. 23-25 ;

> L'ignorance et l'erreur à ses naissantes pièces
> En habits de marquis, en robes de comtesse,
> Venaient pour diffamer son chef-d'œuvre nouveau,

and indeed the whole passage in Pope seems to have been suggested by that *Epistle* of Boileau.

The famous passage:

> No place so sacred from such fops is barred,
> Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's church-yard ;
> Nay, fly to altars ; there they'll talk you dead,
> For fools rush in where angels fear to tread,

1. This borrowing was, of course, recognized in the 18th century. See *The Gray's-Inn Journal* (N° 15, Jan. 27, 1752), in *The Works of Arthur Murphy* (ed. 1786, v. V, p. 131).

is taken directly from Boileau, *Art Poétique*, IV, 53-58 (not from Soame's translation, where the word "angel" is not used);

> Gardez-vous d'imiter ce rimeur furieux,
> Qui de ses vains écrits, lecteur harmonieux,
> Aborde en récitant quiconque le salue,
> Et poursuit de ses vers les passants dans la rue.
> Il n'est temple si saint, des anges respecté,
> Qui soit contre sa muse un lieu de sûreté.

The line about Longinus:

> And is himself that great sublime he draws,

reveals Pope's knowledge of Boileau's translation of that author, for Boileau, in his Preface to his translation, says the very same thing: "Souvent il fait la figure qu'il enseigne; et, en parlant du sublime, il est lui-même très sublime".

Warton discovered a great resemblance between the closing lines of Pope's *Essay*, and Boileau's *Art Poétique*, but I doubt if there is any indebtedness.

Apart from these borrowings, the work reveals its indebtedness to Boileau as a model by the fact (1) that, unlike Horace's *Ars poetica*, a unity is given to it by the constant recurrence, like a refrain, of the phrases "nature", "reason", "good sense" as the watchwords of the poet; (2) by the frequent suggestion that though the rules should be respected, if possible, an interesting and effective work produced in spite of the rules is more estimable than a cold work which obeys all the dictates of the Aristotelian formalities. (Cf. lines like 141 ff., and 232 ff. with lines like the following from Boileau, *Art Poétique*, III, 17 ff. and IV, 37-40); (3) by the tone of urbanity, the tone of the man of the world which pervades it and which contrasts with the heavy didacticism of those who took the Italian critics as their models.

Perhaps the statement made in the last chapter regarding *The Rape of the Lock* — that it was the last fruit of the spirit of the true mock-heroic introduced into English literature by *Le Lutrin* — sums up all that it is really essential to say about the influence of Boileau on that exquisite masterpiece of Pope's. An attempt to prove minute indebtedness, such as has proved effective in the case of *The Dispensary*, would certainly fall to the ground in the case of this poem whose great originality is not its least striking feature. Yet it is not difficult to prove that the influence of Boileau worked

both directly, through *Le Lutrin*, and indirectly, through *The Dispensary*, upon Pope's composition of *The Rape*. Pope was familiar with *Le Lutrin*, either in French or in one of the translations discussed in Chapter I, for he refers to it in his manuscript notes on Dennis's " Remarks on the Rape of the Lock ", and his high opinion of *The Dispensary* and of its author is well known; among other tributes, he told Richardson, speaking of this poem, that " there was hardly an alteration of the innumerable ones through every edition that was not for the better ; and that he took Dr. Garth to be one of the few truly judicious authors. " [1] It is indeed not difficult to find in *The Rape of the Lock* a few direct echoes of Pope's reading of *Le Lutrin* and still more of *The Dispensary*. Surely the first twelve lines, especially lines 11-12 :

> In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
> And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage ?

recall very clearly the opening lines of *Le Lutrin*, ending :

> Tant de fiel entre-t-il dans l'âme des dévots ?

The begining of Canto III :

> Close by these meads, forever crowned with flowers,
> .....
> There stands a structure of majestic fame,

has a great similarity to the passage in *MacFlecknoe* :

> Close to those walls which fair Augusta bind.
> .....
> An ancient fabric raised to inform the sight,
> There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight,

and this recalls the method of introducing the description of the Sainte-Chapelle and the Palais de Justice in *Le Lutrin*, Canto I.

The fourth Canto of *The Rape* contains more echoes of *Le Lutrin* than any other. Though it seems likely that, as Elwin claims in his note to the passage, the description of the Cave of Spleen has some analogy to the Cave of Envy in Ovid, *Met.* II, 760, yet the surrounding of Spleen with allegorical figures is surely suggested by the picture of Envy in *The Dispensary*, Canto II, which in its turn is indebted, as we have seen, to the portraits of La Discorde and La

1. *Richardsoniana*, 1776, p. 195.

Chicane in *Le Lutrin*.[1] Compare these three passages and I think the genealogy of Pope's Spleen will be evident :

Le Lutrin, V, 37-44 :

> On l'appelle Chicane ; et ce monstre odieux
> Jamais pour l'équité n'eut d'oreilles ni d'yeux.
> La Disette au teint blême et la triste Famine,
> Les Chagrins dévorants et l'infâme Ruine,
> Enfants infortunés de ses raffinements
> Troublent l'air d'alentour de longs gémissements.

The Dispensary, II, 17-34 :

> In a dark grott the baleful haggard lay,
> Breathing black vengeance and infecting day,
> But how deformed and worn with spiteful woes,
> When Accius has applause, Dorsennus shows.
> The cheerfull blood her meagre cheeks forsook,
> And basilisks sat brooding in her look ;
> A bald and bloated toad-stool raised her head ;
> The plumes of boding ravens were her bed.
> .....
> Around the fiend in hideous order sate,
> Foul brawling Infamy and bold Debate,
> Gruff Discontent through Ignorance misled,
> And clam'rous Faction at her party's head :
> Restless Sedition still dissembling Fear,
> And sly Hypocrisy with pious leer.

Rape of the Lock, IV, 20 ff.

> Here in a grotto sheltered close from air,
> And screened in shade from day's detested glare,
> She sighs forever on her pensive bed,
> Pain at her side and Megrim at her head.
> .....
> Two handmaids wait the throne : alike in place,
> But differing far in figure and in face.
> Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,

1. Kames, *El. Crit.*, p. 164, links these passages as follows : "The interposition of the gods, in the manner of Homer and Virgil, ought to be confined to ludicrous subjects, which are much enlivened by such interposition handled in the form of a parody ; witness the Cave of Spleen, *Rape of the Lock* IV : the goddess of Discord, *Lutrin*, I, and the goddess of Indolence, *Lutrin* II."

Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed.
.....,
There Affectation with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen.

Note how much closer is the similarity of Pope's passage to Garth than to Boileau.

In the same Canto of *The Rape*, on the other hand, there is a passage much more closely related to the corresponding one in *Le Lutrin* than to that in *The Dispensary*. This is the address of the Gnome to the goddess of Spleen :

Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex from fifty to fifteen:
.....
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy power disdains,
And thousands more in equal wealth maintains.
But oh ! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
.....
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
.....
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen,

which, in its conception and construction, in the very sequence of its clauses, is clearly modelled on the address of Sidrac to Chicane (*Lutrin*, V, 63 ff.) :

Reine des longs procès, dit-il, dont le savoir
Rend la force inutile et les lois sans pouvoir.
Toi pour qui dans le Mans le laboureur moissonne,
Pour qui naissent à Caen tous les fruits de l'automne,
Si, dès mes premiers ans, heurtant tous les mortels,
L'encre a toujours pour moi coulé sur tes autels,
Daigne encor me connaître en ma saison dernière ;
D'un prélat qui t'implore exauce la prière ;
Un rival orgueilleux, de ma gloire offensé,
A détruit le lutrin par nos mains redressé.
Épuise en sa faveur ta science fatale :
Du Digeste et du Code ouvre-nous le dédale,
Et montre-nous cet art connu de tes amis,
Qui, dans ses propres lois, embarrasse Thémis.

Here Pope is evidently much more indebted to Boileau than to Garth, whose passage in Canto III of *The Dispensary* (Squirt's address to Disease) is much less directly reminiscent of *Le Lutrin*.

Thalestris's attempt to goad Belinda to seek revenge in *The Rape*, IV 95 ff., is strongly reminiscent of the two passages in *Le Lutrin*, III, 125 ff. and IV, 77 ff., in the first of which La Chicane shows to the stealers of the lectern how much dishonour their retreat at the sight of an owl will bring upon them, and in the second of which the *chantre* expresses his indignation at the sight of the lectern erected over his bench. Particularly the passage beginning l. 103 :

> Gods ! shall the ravisher display your hair,
> While the Fops envy and the Ladies stare !
> Honour forbid ! at whose unrivalled shrine
> Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
> Methinks already I your tears survey,
> Already hear the horrid things they say,
> Already see you a degraded toast,
> And all your honour in a whisper lost !
>
> .....
>
> Sooner shall grass in Hyde-Park circle grow,
> And wits take lodging in the sound of Bow ;
> Sooner let earth, air, sea to Chaos fall,
> Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots perish all !

seems to be a blend of *Lutrin*, III, 125 ff. :

> Songez quel déshonneur va souiller votre gloire,
> Quand le chantre demain entendra sa victoire.
> Vous verrez tous les jours le chanoine insolent
> Au seul mot de hibou vous sourire en parlant.
> Votre âme à ce penser, de colère murmure ;
> Allez donc de ce pas en prévenir l'injure ;
> Méritez les lauriers qui vous sont réservés,
> Et ressouvenez-vous quel prélat vous servez,

and of *Lutrin*, IV, 77 ff. :

> Ah ! plutôt qu'un moment cet affront m'obscurcisse,
> Renonçons à l'autel, abandonnons l'office,
> Et sans lasser le ciel par des chants superflus,
> Ne voyons plus un chœur où l'on ne nous voit plus.
>
> .....
>
> Non, s'il n'est abattu, je ne saurais plus vivre.

A moi, Girot, je veux que mon bras m'en délivre.
Périssons, s'il le faut; mais de ses ais brisés
Entraînons, en mourant, les restes divisés.

The appearance of Ariel in a dream to Belinda beseeching her to beware of some disastrous impending event, may have been suggested by the opening of *Le Lutrin* in which Discord appears to the sleeping treasurer, warning him against the encroachments of the rebellious precentor. The didactic tone of Clarissa's speech at the beginning of Canto IV, may possibly be owing to the similar tone of the speech of La Piété at the beginning of the last Canto of *Le Lutrin*. The fight in Canto V of the *Rape* — no mock-heroic is complete without a fight (and this is probably an inheritance from the Italian mock-heroic) — seems to me much more indebted to the fight in *The Dispensary* than to that in *Le Lutrin* as a model.

One of the great originalities of *The Rape of the Lock*, one of the devices which give it a poetic charm and readableness that most mock-epics do not have for us to-day, is its substitution of the Sylphs for the ancient goddesses of Tassoni or the abstractions of Boileau. Pope says the Sylphs were suggested to him by the reading of the Abbé Villar's book on the Rosicrucians entitled *Le Comte de Gabalis*. The suggestions for using this particular form of "machine" no doubt came from *Le Comte de Gabalis*, but was not the need of a "machine" in general suggested by the fact that Boileau and Garth had both used them? The fact that the figure of Spleen, which is so obviously imitated, as has been shown, from the Chicane of Boileau and the Envy of Garth, appears for the first time in the enlarged form of *The Rape of the Lock*, along with the Sylphs, rather supports this view.

A point which I am not competent to discuss in detail and which I must content myself with merely suggesting is that Pope is certainly indebted to Boileau and Garth rather than to Tassoni or any other Italian writer for the device of parodying well-known passages from classical authors. Boileau uses this device more than his English imitators. Warton [1] adduces the "Tu dors, Prélat? tu dors" modelled on "εὕδεις, Ἀτρέος υἱὲ" of Homer, and the language of the barber's wife based on expostulations to Aeneas in the Second Book of the *Aeneid* as examples of this device in Boileau, and the parody of Sarpedon's speech in Homer in *The Rape*, V, 9,

1. *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, v. I, p. 238 ff., London, 1806.

the parody of Achilles' sceptre *ibid*, IV, 133, the parody of the scales of Jupiter, *ibid*, V, 71 as examples in Pope.

Both Warton and Courthope point out as an advantage that Pope has over Boileau the fact that in *The Rape* the mock-heroic spirit is sustained to the end, whereas the tone of the last Canto of *Le Lutrin* is not that of mock-heroic at all. Moreover, Pope completes his story, which Boileau never does. Apart from this, it might be asked, on the other hand, whether *The Rape of the Lock* is as true to mock-heroic type as *Le Lutrin*; whether the poetic and imaginative qualities which make it such fascinating reading do not soften just a little that satiric and parodic intention which by definition is the *raison d'être* of the mock-heroic. But here I am diverging into literary criticism. [1]

To sum up, we may say *The Rape of the Lock* is indebted to Boileau — both directly and through Garth [2] — for a few direct borrowings, for the idea of " machines ", for the device of parodying passages from classical authors, but above all for the following two things : first, the model of a new form of poem which should combine ingeniously the two *genres* which it was the special ambition of the age to excel in, epic and satire, and which should combine them not in an inorganic mass like the Italian mock epics, in which epic, pastoral, burlesque and satire alternate, but an

1. For a comparison of *Le Lutrin* and *The Rape* as mock-heroics, see Courthope's *Works of Pope*, v. V, p. 169 ff.

2. I hope I have succeeded in showing that we can hardly accept Schenck's conclusion that *The Rape of the Lock* is *much more* indebted to *The Dispensary* than to *Le Lutrin*. A detailed examination of its indebtedness to *The Dispensary* does not, of course, come within the scope of my investigation. The connection of *The Rape* with *The Dispensary* is further emphasized by the remark of Pope (quoted by Spence) in reference to his poem : " The machinery was added afterwards to make it look a little more considerable and the scheme of adding it was much liked and approved by several of my friends and particularly by Dr. Garth, who, as he was one of the best-natured men in the world, was very fond of it. " (Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 195). For further 18th-century opinion as to the antecedents of *The Rape*, see Trumbull's Letter to Pope of March 6, 1713; Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, v. IV, pp. 433-35; Lord Hervey's " Letter from a Nobleman at Hampton Court to a Doctor of Divinity " (See Courthope's *Life of Pope*, p. 261.) Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*, p. 105; James Beattie's *Essays on Poetry and Music, etc.*, 3rd ed., 1779, p. 19. De Quincey's strongly-worded denial of any indebtedness on Pope's part to *Le Lutrin* will be found in his review of *Schlosser's Literary History* (Masson ed., v. XI, p. 31); it has no more force than any other of De Quincey's remarks regarding a literature he despised and ignored.

organic whole, marked by unity of tone and complete fusion of the component elements; and second, for this tone itself, a blend of pervasive irony and urbane refinement of thought and diction.[1]

Though Dennis contended that *The Dunciad* was not a true mock-heroic poem, because it lacks action, which is the essence of an epic poem, yet it has as much claim to be so classified as Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*. Has *The Dunciad* any direct indebtedness to *Le Lutrin* as a model, apart from its necessary indirect indebtedness to it as the prototype of English mock-heroics? Hardly any, I think. The story is entirely different, not consisting in a contest between two persons or parties as all poems directly imitated from *Le Lutrin* do, but in an induction ceremony, which, among other things, connects it directly with Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* as a model. Moreover, its spirit is not so refined or urbanely ironic as that of *The Rape of the Lock* and therefore not as near that of *Le Lutrin*; its occasional coarseness, its variety of tone and its monotonous action connect it in some respects more closely with Italian mock-epic. But, when one has said that it is an expansion of *MacFlecknoe*, one has really said all that is necessary to assign it its place in the history of mock-heroic. All this, it should be noted, refers to *The Dunciad* considered wholly as a mock-epic; its indebtedness to Boileau from the point of view of *satire* and *literary criticism* will be examined later.

Yet there are one or two individual passages in *The Dunciad* which may have been imitated from *Le Lutrin*. The passage in Book I, beginning:

> Close to those walls where Folly holds her throne,
> .....

and going on to describe

> The cave of Poverty and Poetry.
> .....
> In clouded majesty here Dulness shone;
> Four guardian virtues, round, support her throne;

1. Dennis's *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* of course consists largely of a comparison of Pope's poem with Boileau's, but almost wholly from the aesthetico-moral point of view and not at all from the point of view of the *Quellenforscher*. Yet the mere fact that the standard by which the English mock-heroic is judged is Boileau's poem and not any other mock-heroic, is itself a link in my argument.

Fierce champion Fortitude, that knew no fears
Of hisses, blows, or want, or loss of ears.
Calm Temperance, whose blessings those partake, etc.

seems, like the picture of Spleen in *The Rape of the Lock*, to be indebted to Boileau's picture of Chicane, *Lutrin*, V, 39 ff., and to Garth's Envy in *The Dispensary*. Pope himself, in a note, connects ll. 311-12 of Book I, the cry of Dulness :

O! when shall rise a Monarch all our own,
And I, a nursing mother, rock the throne,

with ll. 112-13 of Canto II of *Le Lutrin*, the cry of Mollesse :

Hélas, qu'est devenu ce temps, cet heureux temps,
Où les rois s'honoraient du nom de fainéants.

And again he admits the closeness with which he read Boileau by acknowledging a connection between ll. 555-6 of Book IV :

Another (for in all what one can shine?)
Explains the *Sève* and *Verdeur* of the vine,

and ll. 23-4 of Boileau's *Third Satire* :

Et je gagerais bien que chez le commandeur
Villandri priserait sa sève et sa verdeur.

But a careful and repeated reading of *The Dunciad* fails to enable me to find a single other instance of direct borrowing or even imitation.[1]

The place of Edward Young in the history of English verse-satire deserves more attention than it has received. Though a considerable number of adaptations of Boileau's satires and epistles were made, as we have seen, in the Age of Dryden, and though this persistent practice gradually suppled and refined the style of English satire, yet there is no achievement to register in this department comparable to *The Rape of the Lock* or *The Essay on Criticism* or even to *The Dispensary* or Soame's *Art of Poetry*, until the appearance of Young's satires entitled *The Love of Fame* or *The Universal Passion* between 1725 and 1728. Just why these satires occupy so

1. Since the above was written, it has struck me that there may be faint reminiscences of "the battle of the books" in *Le Lutrin* in the passage describing the burning of the books on the altar in *The Dunciad*, Bk, I, and in that concerning the effect of the reading aloud of dull authors in Bk. II.

important a position will be explained in the chapter on "Boileau's Influence on English Poetry"; here we are concerned, as usual, only with specific borrowings, if any, made by Young from Boileau. That Young was a careful reader of Boileau is evident from the passage from the preface of *The Love of Fame* quoted above [1], and, though no complete imitation of any one of Boileau's works is to be found among the Satires and Epistles of Young, the latter contain quite a few "touches" taken from the French poet.

Lines 3-4 of Satire II in *The Love of Fame*:

> Heroes and gods make other poems fine,
> Plain satire calls for sense in every line,

recall lines 267-70 of Satire IX of Boileau:

> La satire, en leçons, en nouveautés fertile,
> Sait seule assaisonner le plaisant et l'utile,
> Et d'un vers qu'elle épure aux rayons du bon sens,
> Détromper les esprits des erreurs de leur temps.

Lines 278-280 of the same Satire of Young:

> While I a moment name, a moment's past;
> I'm nearer death in this verse than the last,

are an imitation of Boileau, Ep. III, 47-48:

> Hâtons-nous, le temps fuit, et nous traîne avec soi:
> Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi. [2]

Young's two Satires on Women do not seem to owe much to Boileau's Tenth Satire, but the reference to "she-atheists" in line 410 of Satire VI, seems to have some connection with Boileau's Satire X, vs. 654-7:

> Et que serait-ce donc, si, censeur plus tragique,
> J'allais t'y faire voir l'athéisme établi,
> Et, non moins que l'honneur, le ciel mis en oubli?

Lines 419-426 of the same Satire of Young, particularly 425-6:

> They Heaven defy, to earth's vile dregs a slave,
> Through cowardice most execrably brave,

1. See Book I, p. 35.

2. Boileau's line was no doubt suggested by the "Vive memor lethi, fugit hora; hoc quod loquor inde est" of Persius (Sat. V, l. 153) but Young's line is nearer to Boileau's than to that of Persius.

are closely modelled on Boileau, Ep. III, 15-26, of which the last five lines are :

> Vois-tu ce libertin en public intrépide,
> Qui prêche contre un Dieu que dans son âme il croit ?
> Il irait embrasser la vérité qu'il voit :
> *Mais de ses faux amis il craint la raillerie,*
> *Et ne brave ainsi Dieu que par poltronnerie.*

Line 23 of Young's First Epistle (to Pope) :

> Merit less solid less despite had bred,

may possibly have been suggested by the close of Boileau's *Stances à M. Molière* :

> Si tu savais un peu moins plaire,
> Tu ne leur déplairais pas tant.

The second Epistle recalls the style of the *Art poétique* in many passages, and a few seem to be more or less direct borrowings. Lines 41-48, on the poet's obligation to scorn " filthy lucre " :

> 'Tis arrant simony to sing for gold,
> 'Tis immortality should fire your mind,

are clearly related to vs. 173-78 of the *Art poétique*, IV :

> Si l'or seul a pour vous d'invincibles appas,
> Fuyez ces lieux charmants qu'arrose le Permesse ;
> Ce n'est point sur ses bords qu'habite la richesse.
> Aux plus savants auteurs, comme aux plus grands guerriers,
> Apollon ne promet qu'un nom et des lauriers,

and to vs. 125 :

> Travaillez pour la gloire, etc.

Lines 71-74 :

> Wits are a despicable race of men,
> If they confine their talents to the pen ;
> When the man shocks us, while the writer shines,
> Our scorn in life, our envy in his lines,

recall Boileau's injunction to the poet (*A. P.*, IV, 121-24) :

> Que les vers ne soient pas votre éternel emploi,
> Cultivez vos amis, soyez homme de foi,

C'est peu d'être agréable et charmant dans un livre,
Il faut savoir encore et converser et vivre.

Lines 119-120 :

Write and re-write, blot out and write again,
And for its swiftness ne'er applaud your pen,

and the following are a summing-up of the passage (lines 163-174) in Canto I of Boileau's *Art Poétique* :

Travaillez à loisir.....
Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage
Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez ;
Ajoutez quelquefois et souvent effacez.

Lines 131 ff. :

Excuse no fault, tho' beautiful, 'twill harm ;
One fault shocks more than twenty beauties charm.
Our age demands correctness.....

recall *A. P.*, I, 175 ff. :

C'est peu qu'en un ouvrage où les fautes fourmillent,
Des traits d'esprit semés de temps en temps pétillent.

Lines 127-8 :

The same good sense that makes a man excel,
Still makes him doubt he ne'er has written well,

recall Boileau's Second Satire, 91-94 :

Mais un esprit sublime en vain veut s'élever
A ce degré parfait qu'il tâche de trouver ;
Et toujours mécontent de ce qu'il vient de faire,
Il plaît à tout le monde et ne saurait se plaire.

Other parallel passages might be pointed out in this Second Epistle which seems to be a little *Ars Poetica* modelled mainly on certain parts of Boileau's.[1]

These poems of Young might have been better remembered if they had not been almost immediately cast into the shade by that

1. Since the above was written, I have noted some general resemblances to Boileau's *Satire V* in Young's *Satire I.*

brilliant series of masterpieces in a similar style which Pope brought out during the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, and which are generally known as the *Moral Essays* and the *Satires*. The place of these poems in the evolution of the Bolevian type of satire in England will be examined later; here, as in the case of Young, our inquiry bears only on specific imitations of ideas or expressions in Boileau.

There are very few reminiscences of Boileau in the *Moral Essays* (including the *Essay on Man*). It is just possible that Warton's linking of line 62 of the First Epistle :

> While one there is who charms us with his spleen,

with Boileau's :

> Un esprit né chagrin plaît par son chagrin même,

may be justified, but it seems to me a little far-fetched.

Warton[1] seems to think that in Pope's *Character of Women* he has " caught the manner of Boileau " and he quotes as an example of the style that Pope imitated, Boileau's portrait of the *Savante*, but I must say that a careful comparison of the two Satires only convinces me that there is practically no connection between them. Courthope points out rightly, in discussing Johnson's statement that Pope has surpassed Boileau in his treatment of the same subject, that the purposes of the two poets were quite different : Boileau's Satire is simply a watering-down of Juvenal's Sixth Satire, whereas " Pope's design was completely original; the leading principles of the Essay, that 'most women have no character at all', and that the ruling passions of the sex are 'the love of pleasure and the love of sway', are deductions from his own philosophical system ; while the particular instances are admirably worked up to illustrate the general idea. "

In the *Essay on Man*, the 4th Ep. contains a few reminiscences

1. Cf. Warton, *Essay on Pope*, II, 199 : " If this Epistle (on Women) yields in any respect to the Tenth Satire of Boileau on the same subject, it is in the delicacy and variety of the transitions by which the French writer passes from one character to another, connecting each with the foregoing. It was a common saying of Boileau, speaking of Bruyère, that one of the most difficult parts of Composition was the art of transition. That we may see how happily Pope has caught the manner of Boileau, let us survey one of his portraits; it shall be that of his learned lady, etc. "

of Boileau. Lines 205-216 seem like a compression of Boileau's 5th Satire (On Nobility, to Dangeau)[1] and lines 207-208:

> Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
> In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece,

are lifted almost bodily from lines 85-86 of the French work:

> Et si leur sang tout pur, ainsi que leur noblesse,
> A passé jusqu'à vous de Lucrèce en Lucrèce.

Lines 219-222:

> Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
> From Macedonia's madman to the Swede.
> The whole strange purpose of their lives to find
> Or make, an enemy of all mankind!

cannot be independent of those strikingly similar lines on military ambition (where identically the same historical exemplar is used) in Boileau's 8th Satire, lines 98 ff.:

> Ce vice fut toujours la vertu des héros.
> Quoi donc! à votre avis fut-ce un fou qu'Alexandre?
> Qui? cet écervelé qui mit l'Asie en cendre?
> Ce fougueux l'Angéli, qui, de sang altéré,
> Maître du monde entier s'y trouvait trop serré?[2]

Finally, lines 379-380:

> Formed by thy converse, happily to steer
> From grave to gay, from lively to severe,

are imitated from Boileau's *Art poétique*, I, 75-76:

> Heureux qui, dans ses vers, sait d'une voix légère
> Passer du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère!

The *Satires* (properly so-called) offer the seeker for parallels a richer yield. In the *Imitations from Horace* themselves, one might think it useless to look for such parallels; but, as a matter of fact, even in them, not only does Pope often seem to be guided in what he takes and what he leaves in Horace by the precedent that Boi-

1. Or else of Oldham's imitation of it.
2. Juvenal's "Unus Pellaeo juveni non sufficit orbis:
Aestuat infelix angusto limite mundi" (Sat. X, 168-9)
is not so likely to have been the source.

leau had established beforehand in sifting the classical material[1], but sometimes we even catch echoes of Bolevian rather than Horatian phrases.

The *Imitation of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* (to Mr. Fortescue) resembles the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (to be discussed presently) in being, like it, an *apologia pro vita sua* and a defence of satire. The poet seems to be under obligations to many of the same passages in Boileau as in *The Epistle*. Verses 11-14 :

> .....Not write ! but then I think
> .....
> Fools rush into my head and so I write,

expressing the force of his *penchant* to write satire, are based on nothing in Horace's Satire, but do recall several passages in Boileau's Seventh and Ninth Satires and the lines (21-32) in which he deprecates the idea that he should write epic, pastoral or panegyric poetry instead of satire are based on the same passage of Horace (Sat. I, Bk. II, vs. 10-15) that Boileau had already adapted in Satire IX, vs. 29 ff., though Pope's imitation is much freer than Boileau's. Verses 51-52 :

> I love to pour out all myself, as plain
> As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne,

recall vs. 57-60 of Boileau's Ninth Epistle :

> ..... mon cœur, toujours conduisant mon esprit,
> Ne dit rien aux lecteurs qu'à soi-même il n'ait dit,
> Ma pensée au grand jour partout s'offre et s'expose.

The charming verses 122-132, in which Pope celebrates the friends who visit his retreat at Twickenham ;

> There my retreat the best companions grace,
> Chiefs out of war and statesmen out of place,

recall the passage in Boileau's Tenth Epistle where he tells of his distinguished visitors at Auteuil :

> Aujourd'hui même encore, de deux sens affaibli,
> Retiré de la cour et non mis en oubli,
> Plus d'un héros, épris des fruits de mon étude,
> Vient quelquefois chez moi goûter la solitude.

1. This point will be developed later. See Book IV, ch. IX.

In Horace's Sat. I, Bk. II, vs. 71-74, on the other hand, it is not Horace himself but his predecessor, Lucilius, who is represented as entertaining great men in retirement, nor is the scene of the entertainment indicated as in Boileau :

> Quin ubi se a vulgo et scena in secreta remorant
> Virtus Scipiadae et mitis sapientia Laeli,
> Nugari cum illo et discincti ludere donec
> Decoqueretur olus soliti.....

As for Horace's own relations with such men, he merely says vaguely :

> ..... Quidquid sum ego, quamvis
> Infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me
> Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
> Invidia..... (*ibid.*, vs. 74-77) [1].

In the so-called *Epistle to Augustus* (the *Imitation of the First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace*), vs. 175-180 :

> I who so oft renounce the Muses, lie,
> Not —'s self e'er tells more fibs than I;
> When sick of Muse, our follies we deplore,
> And promise our best friends to rhyme no more;
> We wake next morning in a raging fit,
> And call for pen and ink to show our wit,

recall several of Boileau's complaints about his inability to give up writing verse, particularly the passage in the Second Satire (vs. 26-30) :

> Je fais mille serments de ne jamais écrire.
> Mais quand j'ai bien maudit et Muses et Phébus,
> Je la vois qui paraît, quand je n'y pense plus;
> Aussitôt, malgré moi, tout mon feu se rallume;
> Je reprends sur-le-champ le papier et la plume,

rather than the terse lines of Horace :

1. Warton says that verses 77-78 of Pope's Satire I :

> Whoe'er offends at some unlucky time
> Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme,

are closely copied from Boileau. If so, Boileau's lines referred to must be vs. 99-100, Satire IX :

> Dont les noms en cent lieux, placés comme en leurs niches
> Vont de vos vers malins remplir les hémistiches ?

Ipse ego qui nullos me adfirmo scribere versus
Invenior Parthis mendacior, et prius orto
Sole vigil calamum et chartas et scrinia posco.
(Ep. II, i, 112-114.)

In the same poem, verses 404 ff. :

But Verse alas! your Majesty disdains;
And I'm not used to Panegyric strains:
The zeal of fools offends at any time,
But most of all, the zeal of fools in rhyme.
Besides, a fate attends on all I write,
That, when I aim at praise, they say I bite.
A vile encomium doubly ridicules:
There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools,

recall numerous passages in Boileau, e. g. Satire VII, vs. 26-27 :

Je ne puis pour louer rencontrer une rime,
Dès que j'y veux rêver, ma veine est aux abois.

Satire IX, vs. 49-50 :

: Un poème insipide et sottement flatteur
Déshonore à la fois le héros et l'auteur,

Epistle VIII, vs. 34 ff :

..... nous autres satiriques,
Propres à relever les sottises du temps,
Nous sommes un peu nés pour être mécontents.
.....
Notre style languit dans un remerciment.[1]

In the *Imitation of the Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* (to Col. Cotterel), vs. 153 ff :

In vain bad rhymers all mankind reject.
.....
But how severely with themselves proceed
The men, who write such verse as we can read?

recall Boileau's Second Satire, vs. 87 ff. :

Un sot, en écrivant, fait tout avec plaisir;
Il n'a point en ses vers l'embarras de choisir,
.....

1. Verses 257-263 in Horace's Epistle II, i, to which Pope's lines vaguely correspond, do not really say the same thing at all.

Mais un esprit sublime en vain veut s'élever
A ce degré parfait qu'il tâche de trouver ;
Et toujours mécontent de ce qu'il vient de faire,
Il plaît à tout le monde et ne saurait se plaire,

and are perhaps a reminiscence of other parts of this Satire. [1]

The story in verses 184 ff. strongly resembles Boileau's story of the *bigot* in Satire IV, vs. 103. But both passages are probably imitations of Horace, Ep. II, ii, 128 ff. Verse 206 ff. :

Soon as I enter at my country door,
My mind resumes the thread it dropt before;
Thoughts which at Hyde-Park-Corner I forgot,
Meet and rejoin me in the pensive Grot,

recall the charming opening passage of Boileau's Ep. VI, describing his country retreat at Hautile, especially vs. 27-28 :

Tantôt, cherchant la fin d'un vers que je construi,
Je trouve au coin d'un bois le mot qui m'avait fui.

The first *Dialogue* of the *Epilogue to the Satires*, in verses 6-9 :

Why now this moment, don't I see you steal ?
'Tis all from Horace; Horace long before ye
Said, Tories called him Whig, and Whigs a Tory,

contains an imitation of Boileau, Satire IX, 129-130 :

Avant lui Juvénal avait dit en latin
Qu'on est assis à l'aise aux sermons de Cotin.

Wakefield's surmise that verse 209 of the Second Dialogue :

Men not afraid of God afraid of me,

is connected with the following lines from Boileau's *Discours au Roi* :

Leur cœur qui se connaît, et qui fuit la lumière,
S'il se moque de Dieu, craint Tartuffe et Molière,

is plausible.

1. Horace's lines are :

At qui legitimum cupiet fecisse poema
Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti.
Ep. II, ii, 109-110.

It will be noticed that most of the borrowings from Boileau in the *Imitations from Horace* are passages in which the poet is in some way asserting or defending his personality as a man or as a satirist. Without anticipating the full discussion of this point to be given later, I may state here that in this thrusting forward of the satirist's personality is to be found, in my judgment, the principal mark of Boileau's influence on Pope. There are many personal references in Horace's Satires and Epistles, but they are purely incidental, serving mainly as illustrations to the philosophical points he is making, or as items in the social scene he is portraying. But in Boileau's canvas, Boileau is the central figure. Most of Pope's commentators have noted how Pope's self-consciousness distinguishes his Satires from their Horatian prototypes, but they have failed to see that he had a precedent ready to hand in Boileau. Now, none of his poems is so exclusively animated by this self-consciousness as the famous *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, which we would therefore expect to find particularly reminiscent of Boileau. And such it is in fact. Dr. Johnson's surmise in his *Life of Pope* that it "seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's Address *à son Esprit*" (i. e., his Ninth Satire) requires, indeed, some qualification; for, as is well known, parts of the Epistle were composed as fragments at different periods of Pope's life, and its unity is mainly the unity of a mosaic; so that it seems unlikely that a single model could have served for it. But a detailed examination of the poem, far from diminishing our sense of its indebtedness to Boileau, shows that Pope has borrowed liberally, not merely from the Ninth Satire but from other Satires and Epistles of Boileau, especially the Tenth Epistle. Nearly all these borrowings concern passages dealing with his personality, his integrity as a satirist, his entertainment of the great, his parentage.

Verses 45–46:

> The piece, you think, is incorrect? Why, take it,
> I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it,

recall Boileau's *Art Poétique*, I, 220 ff:

> Vous avez sur ses vers un pouvoir despotique.
> Mais tout ce beau discours dont il vient vous flatter
> N'est rien qu'un piège adroit pour vous les réciter,

and the idea in vs. 79–80:

Out with it, *Dunciad* ! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an ass,

is the thesis of Boileau's Fourth Satire,

.....l'homme le moins sage
Croit toujours seul avoir la sagesse en partage,
Et qu'il n'est point de fou qui par belles raisons
Ne loge son voisin aux Petites Maisons.

Verses 125 ff :

Why did I write ? What sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents' or my own ?

are parallel to vs. 19 ff. of Boileau's Ninth Satire :

.....Quelle verve indiscrète
Sans l'aveu des neuf sœurs vous a rendu poète ?

The enumeration of the distinguished admirers of the poet's work and their contrast with the vulgar herd who decried him in vs. 135-146,

But why then publish? Granville the polite
And knowing Walsh would tell me I could write
.....
Even mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms received one poet more.
.....
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons and Cookes,

seems to me to recall, especially in the artful arrangement of the distinguished names, that passage from Boileau's Seventh Epistle, so much admired by Sainte-Beuve :

Cependant laisse ici gronder quelques censeurs
Qu'aigrissent de tes vers les charmantes douceurs.
.....
Pourvu qu'ils puissent plaire au plus puissant des rois,
Qu'à Chantilly Condé les souffre quelquefois,
Qu'Enghien en soit touché, que Colbert et Vivonne,
Que La Rochefoucauld, Marsillac et Pomponne,
Et mille autres qu'ici je ne puis faire entrer,
A leurs traits délicats se laissent pénétrer,

though the ultimate source of both poets was no doubt the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace (vs. 76-91) :

> .....nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere, ut audax
> Contemptis aliis explosa Arbuscula dixit.
> Men moveat cimex Pantilius, aut cruciet quod
> Vellicet absentem Demetrius, aut quod ineptus
> Fannius Hermogenis laedat conviva Tigelli ?
> Plotius et Varius, Maecenas Virgiliusque,
> Valgius et probet haec Octavius, optimus atque
> Fuscus et haec utinam Viscorum laudet uterque !

Verses 279-292, particularly the following :

> .....for mine obligingly mistakes
> The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo makes.
> Poor guiltless I ! and can I choose but smile,
> When every Coxcomb knows me by my style ?

recall vs. 69 ff. of Boileau's Epistle VI :

> Vient-il de la province une satire fade
> .....
> Pour la faire courir on dit qu'elle est de moi,
> .....
> J'ai beau prendre à témoin et la cour et la ville ;
> Non, à d'autres, dit-il, on connait votre style.

The passage beginning :

> Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
> That tends to make one worthy man my foe,

seems to owe something to several passages from Boileau. e. g.

(1) Satire IX, vs. 211 ff. :

> Ma muse, en l'attaquant, charitable et discrète,
> Sait de l'homme d'honneur distinguer le poète,

(2) Epistle IX, vs. 53 ff. :

> Mais c'est qu'en eux le vrai, du mensonge vainqueur,
> Partout se montre aux yeux et va saisir le cœur,
> Que le bien et le mal y sont prisés au juste,
> Que jamais un faquin n'y tint un rang auguste,
> Et que mon cœur, toujours conduisant mon esprit,
> Ne dit rien aux lecteurs qu'à soi-même il n'ait dit,

(3) Epistle X, vs. 87 ff.

> Dites que harcelé par les plus vils rimeurs,
> Jamais, blessant leurs vers, il n'effleura leurs mœurs.

The personal references to his parents and himself in the latter part of the poem, from line 234 to the end, recall various passages in Boileau. The lines (the third and fourth of which are so important for the history of poetry and criticism) : [1]

> That Flattery, even to kings he held a shame,
> And thought a Lie in verse or prose the same,
> That not in Fancy's maze he wandered long,
> But stooped to Truth and moralized his song ;
> That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
> He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,

recall the passage above-quoted from the Ninth Epistle, and certainly correspond to nothing in the ancient Satirists. The rest seems imitated mainly from Boileau's portrait of himself in Epistle X,

> Que si mêmes un jour le lecteur gracieux,
> Amorcé par mon nom sur vous tourne les yeux,
> Pour m'en récompenser, mes Vers avec usure,
> De votre auteur alors faites-lui la peinture,

Especially lines 368 ff. :

> Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
> Sappho can tell you how this man was bit ;
> This dreaded Satirist Dennis will confess
> Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress,

recall lines 81 ff. of Epistle X:

> Déposez hardiment qu'au fond cet homme horrible,
> Ce censeur qu'ils ont peint si noir et si terrible,
> Fut un esprit doux, simple, ami de l'équité, etc.

The detailed account of his ancestry and his parents,

> Of gentle blood (part shed in Honour's cause,
> While yet in Britain Honour had applause)
> Each parent sprung,

1. See Book IV.

is imitated from Epistle X, 93 ff. :

> Contez-lui qu'allié d'assez hauts magistrats,
> Fils d'un père greffier, né d'aïeux avocats, etc.

and the tender portrait of his parents,

> that Father held it for a rule,
> It was a sin to call our neighbour fool,
> That harmless mother thought no wife a whore,

recall so clearly that charming epitaph of Boileau on his mother:

> Épouse d'un mari doux, simple, officieux,
> Par la même douceur je sus plaire à ses yeux :
> Nous ne sûmes jamais ni railler ni médire,

that I feel sure there must be a connection between the two.[1]

Among the "Miscellaneous" verses of Pope is a translation in twelve lines of Boileau's rendering of the fable of Justice and the Oyster, in his Second Epistle.

1. Bowles thinks verses 19-20 :

> Is there who locked from ink and paper scrawls
> With desperate charcoal round his darkened walls?

were suggested by Boileau's :

> Ainsi tel autrefois qu'on vit avec Faret
> Charbonner de ses vers les murs d'un cabaret.
>
> *Art Poétique*, I, vs. 21-22.

CHAPTER IV

1711-1830

All that the English could learn from Boileau in the way of style and ideas had been learnt by the time Pope's last Satire appeared. Even satires and mock-heroics apparently recalling Boileau's manner, which appear after that date, are more likely to be modelled on Pope. There would be no profit, therefore, in analysing satire and epistolary verse of the period under review in this chapter in the minute way that has been followed in the preceding parts of this Book; for, even if direct borrowings from Boileau were found there, they would have no interest for the historian of English poetry. All I shall attempt in this chapter is to give a list of the poems appearing within the period 1711-1830 which either announce themselves as translations from Boileau or which, in my judgment, bear unmistakable signs of borrowing passages from him. A few critical comments and occasionally a quotation may be added here and there. The main interest of this list will be in supplementing the evidence given in the last two chapters of Book I, regarding the long duration of an interest in Boileau and an acquaintance with his works in England.

A. THE SATIRES, EPISTLES AND MINOR WORKS

In a collection of verse entitled *The Constellation: Poems on Several Occasions* (1715) appears a translation of Boileau's earliest epigram (A Climène, 1660). "Two fine letters of M. Boileau" are translated in Tamworth Reresby's *Miscellany of Ingenious Thoughts and Reflections* (1721). Lord Hervey's *Epistle to Mr. Fox* (1731) recalls Boileau's *Satire on Man* in its comparison of the wisdom of the animals with the folly of man.[1] In a collection of

1. Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, v. I, p. 77.

miscellaneous verse entitled *The Honourable Lovers; or, the second and last volume of Pylades and Corinna, Being the remainder of Love Letters and other Pieces (in Verse and Prose) which passed between Richard Gwinnett, Esq., of Great Shurdington in Gloucestershire and Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas, Jun. of Great Russell St., Bloomsbury, London*, 1732, we find a poem called " An Imitation of the Second Satire of Boileau, inscribed to Pylades ", which is really a résumé of Boileau's poem in twenty octosyllabic, rhyming lines. In 1738 appeared Johnson's *London*, the best English imitation of Juvenal's Third Satire; if Boileau had not applied Juvenal's theme to Paris first, Johnson's poem might never have been written; but, of course, Boileau's modernization of Juvenal had already been applied to London by Oldham, and I can find no specific indebtedness to Boileau's First and Sixth Satires in Johnson's *London*. Nor can I see any Bolevian influence in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, with the possible exception of the opening couplet, where "from China to Peru" recalls Boileau's " de Paris au Pérou " in Satire VIII. [1] The notes in Dodsley tell us that the lines on the atheist (vs. 75-80) in John Brown's *Essay on Satire, occasioned by the Death of Mr. Pope*, were imitated from Boileau's Third Epistle, vs. 22-26; [2] and the notes in Bell point out that the same author's *Epistle on Honour to Lord Lonsdale* is nearly all taken from Boileau's Eleventh Satire and quote passages in proof. [3] William Whitehead's *Epistle on Nobility* is more indebted (especially in the references to heraldry in lines 15-18 and the crossing of noble strains in lines 47-62) to Boileau's Fifth Satire than to Juvenal's Eighth Satire. [4] Dodsley's *Modern Reasoning : An Epistle* seems indebted to Boileau's Fourth Satire at the beginning. [5] In *The Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1747, Boileau's Epigram on M. Perrault beginning, " Oui, j'ai dit dans mes vers qu'un célèbre assassin ", is translated by J. Berrington. [6] James Cawthorne's *Vanity of Human Enjoyments* (1749) recalls

1. Johnson's phrase may have had its direct source in Temple's " All nations from China to Peru " in his essay *Of Poetry*. But the latter is itself probably taken from Boileau.
2. Dodsley, *Poems by Several Hands*, v. III, p. 320 and Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, v. V.
3. Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, v. I, p. 163. The poem is in v. I, p. 27.
4. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XVII, p. 209.
5. *Ibid.*, v. XV, p. 337.
6. *Op. cit.*, v. XVII, p. 493.

Boileau's Fourth and Eighth Satires and his Fifth Epistle, but I cannot demonstrate indebtedness ; [1] the same author's *Nobility : a moral essay* (1752) is, in its general scheme, an expansion of Boileau's Fifth Satire, though some lines are lifted straight from Whitehead's earlier imitation just mentioned. [2] Arthur Murphy, the author of *Three Weeks after Marriage*, provides us with two very close imitations of Boileau, *To Dr. Johnson, A Poetic Epistle* (1760), modelled on the Second Satire, and *The Expostulation : A Satire* (1761), modelled on the Ninth Satire. [3] Murphy does not acknowledge his source in either case ; but, though he considerably expands his original and substitutes English literary figures and conditions for French ones, he follows Boileau's scheme very faithfully, and often translates him almost literally. The best poem suggested by a work of Boileau in this period, is Goldsmith's well-known *The Haunch of Venison*, in which the invitation to dinner, the description of the dinner and a few miscellaneous touches are obviously suggested directly by passages in Boileau's Third Satire. Another poem of Goldsmith, *The Logicians Refuted : In Imitation of Dean Swift*, seems, in spite of its title, to go back for its ultimate source to Boileau's Eighth Satire. Anna Seward expanded Boileau's lines *on* the sonnet in the *Art poétique into* a sonnet of her own. [4] Mrs. Piozzi translated Boileau's Eleventh Epistle (to his Gardener). [5] George Crabbe's *An Introductory Address of the Author to his Poems* (1780) bears a considerable resemblance to Boileau's Tenth Epistle (A mes Vers) and may have been suggested by it as well as by Horace, Ep. I, 20. [6] Gifford's *Baviad* (1794) and *Maeviad* are perhaps the last pure examples of the Bolevian literary satire as

1. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XIV, p. 254.

2. See above, p. 221. (Cawthorne's poem is in Chalmers' *E. P.*, v. XIV, p. 250).

3. *Works of Arthur Murphy.*

4. *Poetical Works of Anna Seward* (ed. Walter Scott, Edin., 1810, 3 vols.), v. III, p. 137, sonnet XVI. [See, regarding this Sonnet and Miss Seward's attitude towards Boileau's lines on the sonnet, *The Letters of Anna Seward*, Edin., 1811, v. II, p. 257-58.]

5. First printed in *Mrs. Williams's Miscellanies*, according to an obituary notice of Mrs. Piozzi in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, for May, 1821, p. 471.

6. M. René Huchon says : " As Crabbe knew no French at this time, there is probably no direct imitation of Boileau (*Epitre X*) here. " *Life of Crabbe.* (English translation, p. 104, note 3). But Crabbe might have read it in English translation. The poem is in the *Cambridge English Classics* edition of Crabbe, v. I, p. 73.

introduced into England at the Restoration and perfected by Pope. They are perhaps truer to the Bolevian type than any of their predecessors; for Gifford seems to feel, even more than Dryden or Pope, the true Bolevian sense of the divinity of his mission as the scourge of bad poets (though, of course, he is far less generous and urbane than Boileau). These poems seem, however, to contain no direct borrowings from Boileau unless lines 35-38 of the *Baviad* are based on Boileau's Ninth Satire (vs. 279-83). Samuel Roger's *Epistle to a Friend* (1789), to which is prefixed the Preface quoted in Book I,[1] may be slightly indebted to Boileau's example for some of its personal touches. *The Monthly Review*, in the last years of the eighteenth century, lists three "imitations" of Boileau, of none of which have I been able to find any trace. In May, 1764, it disposes of *The Fourth Satire of Boileau imitated, with a Dedication to R**M**rr** s, Esq.; of O** ll**ll** e, 4to, 6d. Flexney*, with the contemptuous comment "A poor imitation of an imitation!" In October, 1777, it sneers "starv'd to death!" over *A Satire, also an Imitation of the first satire of Boileau, 4to, 1s, Alman* (?). In September, 1788, it says apropos of *Boileau's Satire of Man, Imitated, 8vo, 6d., Bladon, 1787*: "This Satire of Man, as it is styled, presents us with some of the *sentiments* of Boileau, but with very little of his *spirit*. Pope, indeed, who was his great admirer, has drawn off much of it into our language. The extract made by the poetical chemist of 1787 is consequently poor and weak..."[2]

We have seen in Book I that interest in Boileau by no means died out with the close of the eighteenth century. This impression is confirmed by the persistence with which he continues to be translated and imitated after 1800. The century is ushered in by *A Free Translation of Boileau, Epist. 1, l. 61 applied to immoderate ambition of France* (1801) at the hands of the octogenarian poet, Richard Cambridge[3], and by an anonymous *Translation of the Eighth Satire of Boileau on Man* (published by W. Phillips, 1801). The translator informs us that he "has rendered his author as literally as his ability and leisure would permit."[4] Unfortunately one must recognize the justice of the stern judgment pronounced by *The Monthly Review* of January, 1803, which, after quoting

1. See p. 78.
2. For the rest of the comment see pp. 73-74.
3. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XVIII, p. 299.
4. From the Preface. For further quotation from which, see Book I, pp. 81-82.

the opening lines, says: "This will never do; and we must beg the author to exert his honest industry in some other calling, since he is utterly disqualified for any office on Parnassus."[1] In 1808 appeared anonymously *The Satires of Boileau translated; with some account of that Poet's Life and Writings*. This work, which, as we have seen above,[2] attracted considerable attention in the reviews, seems to have been singularly uneven in its workmanship. The criticism in *The Critical Review*[3] bears mainly on the translator's bad rhymes, his defective prosody and carelessness of rendering, which faults, however, are put down to slovenliness rather than to lack of ability. *The Monthly Review* says its strictures are "occasioned by no deficiency of power, but exclusively by the extreme negligence of the writer", and concludes "that this translator has powers sufficient to raise him to a very respectable rank in literature, but that his present production is by far too carelessly executed to deserve a permanent place in our libraries."[4] *The British Critic* is lukewarm, saying: "Neither can we particulary commend the execution of the work. With such specimens before us as translations of satirical writers by Pope, Dryden, Johnson and Gifford, it is impossible to be pleased with any translation of Boileau that does not obviously exhibit the pencil of a master, which this performance certainly does not. It is, however, on the whole, respectable."[5] *The Anti-Jacobin Review* finds the following cause for the mediocrity of the translation: "The present translator has endeavoured to be too literal to succeed completely in catching and transfusing the point and spirit of his author; his obscurity and inharmoniousness have originated in the same cause."[6] It is curious to find almost the very latest of our Boileau-translators returning to the roughness of technique that characterized the earliest, like Oldham and Crowne, and combining it with a literalness in translation that had been out of fashion since Ben Jonson. These are probably symptoms that the Bolevian manner was ceasing to seem natural in English poetry, and that its foreign character was becoming more and more recognized. As I have pointed out above, I have not been able to find any copy of

1. *Op. cit.*, v. CXXI, p. 101.
2. See pp. 83-84.
3. *Op. cit.* Ser. III, v. XV, p. 26 ff. Sept. 1808.
4. *Op. cit.*, v. CXXXIX, p, 200, Feb. 1809.
5. *Op. cit.*, v. XXIII, p. 184, Feb., 1809.
6. *Op. cit.*, v. XXII, p. 412.

this translation. However, the reviewer in *The Monthly Review* gives copious quotations, from which I select the following favourable specimen (from Satire II) of the translator's manner :

> Unequalled genius, whose warm fancy knows
> No rhyming labour, no poetic throes ;
> To whom Apollo has unlocked his store ;
> Whose coin is struck in true Parnassian ore ;
> Thou dextrous master, teach thy skill to me,
> And tell me, Molière, how to rhyme like thee,

and these verses (from Satire VIII) which the reviewer states to be amongst the worst ever written in English :

> Who shall deny, you ask, his sovereign sway
> Over the animals ? Perhaps I may.
> But while all question I at present waive,
> Whether the surly bear in his dull cave,
> Flies from the man or the man from the bear ;
> Or if, by cryers sent to the Barcan lair
> To read the forest law of Nubia,
> The lions might be ousted Lybia. [4]

In *Imitations and Translations from Ancient and Modern Classics* (1809) by Byron's friend J. C. Hobhouse (first Baron Broughton) appear some fragmentary translations from Boileau.[2] The *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1815, contains an adaptation into English of Boileau's epigram *L'Amateur d'Horloges*[3]. In *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature* for January, 1825, appears " an original translation " of a passage from the Tenth Satire (on Women), which " may convey some idea of the attempts made in the satirist's time and encouraged by ecclesiastics to unite a life of dissipation with one of religion. "[4] Finally,

1. It is interesting to note that the translator and one of his reviewers (in *The British Critic*) are under the impression that Boileau's satires " have not before appeared together in an English dress. " But the reviewer in *The Monthly Review* informs them that " a version of all his [Boileau's] works was published in 1712. " He adds : " But its excellence need not frighten this translator from a competition, if he will submit to the necessary labour. " The writer in *The Anti-Jacobin Review* says : " The account of the life and writings of Boileau, which is prefixed to this translation of his satires, is the most interesting and valuable part of the volume. "

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

3. *Op. cit.*, v. LXXXV, Pt. 1.

4. *Op. cit.*, v. XXI, no. 241, p. 77. This translation appears in a note to an article on the combination of religion with social festivities.

in 1824, appeared at Dartford an anonymous translation of *The Fourth and Tenth Satires of Nicholas Boileau Despréaux*, which are mainly interesting as the only departure we have met with from the iambic measure in translations from Boileau; this translator substitutes anapaestic for iambic couplets, as follows:

> Whence comes it, Le Vay'r, that the man the least wise,
> Thinks wisdom just fitted alone to his size?
> That no madman but lodges, whatever his station,
> His neighbour in Bedlam, without hesitation?

This eccentricity is additional proof that the Bolevian manner was becoming obsolete. [1]

B. L'ART POÉTIQUE

After Pope and Young there is no poem in English bearing any possible relationship to the *Art poétique* until we come to Byron's *Hints from Horace*. This is probably the last of the neo-classic "Poetic Arts" in English. It does not seem to me to borrow anything direct from Boileau, but in the sense that it combines literary theory with satire on authors it comes nearer to the *Art poétique*, perhaps, than anything else in English, nearer than the *Essay on Criticism*, for example. On the last page of Robert Thomson's translation of *Le Lutrin*, [2] announcement is made that "shortly will be published, by the same translator, the *Art of Poetry*, from the French of Boileau." Whether this work ever appeared, I do not know. I have found no trace of it.

C. LE LUTRIN

As will appear from a later part of this study, there was a very intense production of mock-heroic poems during the eighteenth century. For this Boileau was responsible. Nevertheless most of

1. This translator also sings the praises of literature in translation. In R. Thomson's translation of *Le Lutrin* (see below, p. 228) are included translations of two epigrams and one sonnet of Boileau. Announcement is also made in this work of the imminent publication, by the same translator, of *the Satires and Epistles of Boileau*. I do not know whether this translation ever appeared. I find no trace of it.

2. See below, p. 228.

these poems had no immediate and direct indebtedness to *Le Lutrin*. But it is proper to mention here one of these numerous mock-epics which followed *The Dispensary* and *The Rape*, namely, *The Rape of the Smock* — a heroi-comical poem in two books by Giles Jacob, published in 1717 — which contains an acknowledgment by its author that he had not merely Pope's but Boileau's poem before him when he wrote it. In Book II, occur the following lines:

> Now had the morn unbared the gates of light
> And the sad nymph in sorrow spent the night.
> In vain as down he lay, the drowsy god
> Touched her soft temple with his leaden rod,

and to the first line is attached the following "author's note": "Boileau's *Lutrin*, Canto V." This line seems a sufficiently colourless one for any writer to feel under an obligation to acknowledge, and indeed it is difficult to verify his reference unless it be to the first four lines of the Fifth Canto of *Le Lutrin*:

> L'Aurore cependant, d'un juste effroi troublée,
> .....

but the note is important as evidence of how the *Lutrin* was read and used as a model right on into the eighteenth century. Another instance is to be found in *The Kite*; *an Heroi-comical Poem in Three Cantos, by Phanuel Bacon; Oxford, 1722*, whose author, however, is less conscientious than Jacob. For he allows the following passage on p. 4 to go without a note:

> Sacred to secrecy and sweet repose,
> Rose an alcove, where ranged in artful rows,
> By Dian wrought, the drowsy poppy grows;
> The virgin here, like Sol's declining ray,
> Withdrew her lustre, and retired from day.
> Gay fancy, ever waking, here retains
> Her liveliest visions and her softest scenes.

Yet is it not pretty clearly indebted to that favourite mine for poetic borrowers, the description of the prelate's alcove, *Le Lutrin*, I, 57-68?

Wolcot's *The Lousiad*, one of the latest of English mock-heroics, recalls *Le Lutrin* only in the abstract figures of Discord and Fame in Canto III. In 1811, Robert Thomson, who announces himself

as the " translator of La Fontaine's Fables, and other poetical works ", published in Paris a complete translation of *Le Lutrin*.[1] This version, which seems to have attracted no notice in the English reviews (perhaps on account of being published on the continent), is the most faithful of all the English renderings of *Le Lutrin*, and it is not, on the whole, inferior to Ozell's version in effectiveness, though the relatively slack handling of the rhymed couplet betrays its nineteenth-century origin. Thomson's fidelity to the letter of his original prevents him from making any of those substitutions of English for French proper names (of places, of authors or of books) so common in the earlier translators, or from expanding a couplet into six or eight lines (the number of lines in each canto of the translation corresponds almost identically to the number in the original). So scrupulous is he that he prefixes to his Sixth Canto the rubric " imitated " and explains : " I call it *imitated*, because in a few verses I have generalized the subject, in order that Protestant drones may partake the satire with their Romish brethren. Otherwise I have kept as close to the original as in the preceding cantos. " This last remark shows that the satiric aspect of *Le Lutrin* even yet bulked large in English eyes. It will be noted how thoroughly in keeping Thomson's attitude towards literal translation is with the views enunciated on that subject by the contemporary translators of Boileau's satires in a previous section. The verses describing the sleeping prelate will give an idea of Thomson's manner and may be compared with other renderings of that celebrated *locus* given above :

> Within an alcove dark, form'd for repose,
> Thick beds of down in costly pride arose ;
> Four pompous curtains doubled round the place,
> Excluded quite the sun's intruding rays.
> There happy indolence, in slumbers bound,
> Maintain'd her sway in silence all profound.
> 'Twas there the prelate, after breakfast, chose
> To wait for dinner in a gentle doze.
> Bright youth sat blooming on his rosy face ;
> His paunch propt up two crops of chin with grace ;
> While the pil'd beds and pillows, as they groan'd,
> His squat rotundity of body own'd.

1. The Lutrin, or Reading-Desk. A Comic-Heroic Poem : in six cantos. From the French of Boileau. By Robert Thomson, etc... Paris. The book is rare, but there is a copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

BOOK III

THE FRENCH CLASSICAL CRITICS IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As was pointed out in the Preface, it is impossible to dissociate the question of Boileau's influence upon English criticism from a study of the influence of that numerous band of French critics some of whom came a little before Boileau and some a little after him, but most of whom may be regarded as satellites revolving in his orbit. A few of these critics, especially those coming after Boileau, like Fénelon and Fontenelle, differ radically from him in certain points; others, like Le Bossu, for example, specialize in certain departments of criticism which Boileau did not neglect but on which he touched briefly; others again repeat most of his doctrines on much the same scale and sometimes in almost identically the same words (though never with the same literary and satiric power). We may, after a careful study of these critics and of what was known of them in England, be compelled to transfer to them the credit for much that has been ascribed to Boileau on account of the general ignorance regarding these other proponents of neo-classicism. At all events, before any dogmatic statement as to what Boileau's precise influence was, the way must be cleared by seeing what particular kinds of influence *might*, at least, have been exercised by others.

This Book makes, of course, even less claim to completeness than any other part of this study. Numerous critical influences (such as the letters of Balzac and Voiture, the prefaces of Scudéry, Sarasin, Saint-Sorlin, the works of the Chevalier de Méré, the writings of Bayle, Baillet, etc.) are not touched upon at all; nor do I pretend to try to exhaust all the references in eighteenth-century English criticism to even those few critics to whom I have confined myself. My selection of critics has been determined by the very simple principle of following in this matter the English critics themselves; I have concerned myself only with those French critics whom they themselves mention with some frequency; others

I disregard. As to the degree of thoroughness with which I have studied the influence of each critic selected, my purpose will be achieved if I succeed in giving a clear outline of the development of his reputation in England and in emphasizing what was the particular aspect of criticism with which his English contemporaries associated his influence. Anything further would be beside the mark here; for this work is not *primarily* a study of the influence of these critics, but of Boileau. Their only right to be here is through their relations to him.

These critics fall naturally into two groups; those contemporary with Boileau (for no French critic of a generation *preceding* Boileau's had any influence in England during our period) and those whose main critical works (if not their lives) post-date his death. The first group contains the most characteristic and influential, if not the most interesting, names we have to deal with, each one of which will deserve a chapter or half-chapter to himself; those in the second may be, for our purposes, dispatched in a general chapter. The men of the first group arrange themselves naturally in an order which is almost if not quite chronological and which takes account of the special influence of each one; (1) Corneille and d'Aubignac (for influence on the drama); (2) Le Bossu (for the epic); (3) Bouhours (for style, especially true and false wit); (4) Rapin (for general criticism). But before taking these up in order, we must glance at some general aspects of French criticism in England during the period we are studying.[1]

1. I am greatly indebted in this Book to the learned notes in Professor J.E. Spingarn's *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, Professor W.P. Ker's *Essays of John Dryden* and Professor Gregory Smith's edition of *The Spectator* in the Everyman Series. I have incorporated many quotations from these sources in the following chapters, and wish to make a general avowal of my debt here.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH CRITICISM IN ENGLAND

Ever since the resumption of literary activities with the return of Charles II in 1660, the eyes of Englishmen turned towards France as the source of critical light. Even before that date, some of the Royalist literary men, exiled in Paris, like Davenant and Cowley, no doubt learned from the French practice round about them, to write critical prefaces in front of their heroic poems, their plays, or whatever it might be that they wrote. But from 1660 onwards, English criticism derives practically all its theories and laws from France. Almost every French critical work is translated into English soon after its appearance and often goes through several editions in translated form during the eighteenth century. It is not till the second half of that century that systematic doubts begin to be expressed regarding the value of the French critics.

The translator's Preface to *Mixt Essays written originally in French by the Sieur de Saint-Evremont* (1685), contains a short history of modern criticism, and outlines the share of the French therein as follows : " After the Italian the French took fire, and began to sublime and purifie themselves upon the rising of that glorious minister, Cardinal Richelieu, who founded the Royal Academy, and having mustered the best wits together, employed them in reforming the stage, the language and manners of his country. L'Abbé Hédelin undertook the theatre, of which he published the most perfect treatise yet extant ; and if the Cardinal had lived some years longer, he would have carried it much higher, and even contended with Athens and Rome themselves. Malherbe, Corneille, Chapelain, Molière, Boileau, Fontaine and Rapin have cultivated and exalted the subject. The learned Chanoine of St. Geneviève, R. P. le Bossu, hath given us the best idea and most exact model of epick poem. "[1] The translator of Le Bossu says

1. This sketch of critical history is reprinted in Ker's edition of *The Essays of John Dryden*, Appendix A., v. II, p. 313.

in his preface (1695) : " At present the French, since the great encouragement they at first received from the learned Richelieu, seem to be uppermost in this sort of learning; and how dull and insipid soever they are said to be in other parts, yet in *criticisms* they are full of curious thoughts and refined reflections. " Lady Winchilsea (1685-1701 ?), in arguing that even women, who cannot read Latin or Greek, but who know French, have no excuse for transgressing the laws of poetry, says : " What rule of Aristotle or Horace is there that has not been given us by Rapin, Despréaux, Dacier, my Lord Roscommon, etc.? " Dryden, in his *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1692), pays a tribute to the French critics in harking back to his early struggles with the problems of composition : " when I was myself in the rudiments of my poetry, without name or reputation in the world, having rather the ambition of a writer than the skill; when I was drawing the outline of an art, without any living master to instruct me in it; an art which had been better praised than studied in England..... when thus, as I say, before the use of the loadstone or the knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without any other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage among the moderns.... " [1] and in the *Dedication to the Aeneis* (1697) he comes out flatly for the French critics : " For impartially speaking, the French are as much better critics than the English, as they are worse poets. " [2] Collier, in his *Defence of the Short View*, links the French with the classical critics in the following passage : " Mr. Congreve is so kind as to inform me that I talk in the pedantical cant of Fable, Intrigue, Discovery, of Unities of Time, etc. He means the pedantical cant of Aristotle and Horace, of Bossu and Corneille, of Rapin and Mr. Dryden; that is of the *best* critics, both ancient and modern upon the subject. " [3] Dennis, in the *Epistle Dedicatory* to his *Advancement of Poetry*, says : " Towards the beginning of the last century, the French, a subtle and discerning nation, began to be sensible of this, and upon it several of their extraordinary men, both poets and philosophers, began to cultivate criticism..... these alterations happened in France while the French reformed the structure of their poems by the noble models of ancient archi-

1. Ker, v. II, p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 178.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

tects. " The Preface to the Publisher of Basil Kennet's translation of Rapin (1706) says : " While France aspires to be absolute in arts and empire, our nation, that so well disputes the double prize with its neighbours, has, at the same time, made use of their industry, to set bounds to their ambition, has studied their critics, to exceed their authors, and practised their martial discipline, to maintain advantage over them in courage and strength. " Pope confessed in the *Essay on Criticism* that " critic learning flourished most in France. "[1] Gildon's acknowledgment of his " sources " might have been made by any of his critical brethern : " Whatever I found of use to my design in Aristotle (chiefly), in Horace, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Boileau, Rapin, Dacier, Gerard Vossius' Poetical Institutions, the late Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal, Mr. Rymer, the present Duke of Buckinghamshire's most excellent Essay on Poetry, Mr Dennis or any other, I have made bold with. "[2] In the same work from which this quotation is taken Gildon gives reasons for preferring the French critics in which most of his contemporaries would have acquiesced : " I must secondly remark that they have preserved politeness in all their learning. Bossu and Dacier write like gentlemen and men of fine taste, though perfectly skilled in all the necessary criticisms of the Greek and Roman language, whereas Vossius (I mean Gerard, not Isaac, who is much more polite), Scaliger and many of our English men of learning, have so far lost themselves in verbal criticisms, or in mere collections of opinions, that they never distinguish finely and never observe further; but give us authority on authority, in a stiff, dry, jejune manner, without drawing any valuable doctrine from what they have taken the pains to give from the ancients. The French, on the contrary, burthen not our memories, nor confound our judgments, by multiplicity of quotations, but give us the solid doctrine they have drawn from them, and the insuperable reasons on which they are founded. They dwell not on the mere grammatical criticisms on words, but penetrate further into the reasons and sense and judgment of the authors; and give us light out of obscurity, which some have involved the ancients in. What reason, therefore, has any man to object, as an odium, our consulting the French authors, when he, or his colleagues, shall write like them ; I dare engage the ingenious

1. *Op. cit.*, line 712.
2. *Complete Art of Poetry.* Preface.

will be obliged to them, and consult them without the French. There is nothing so trifling and ridiculous as the praises given Homer, Virgil, etc., by the Dutch, most of the Italian and English writers; but Bossu and Dacier, to the honour of their country, entered into the true merit of those great poets in their design, etc." [1]

Addison is usually respectful towards the French critics, but now and again he becomes restive under the constant sing-song of "unities, design, diction, etc.," and in the following passage his impatience breaks out unrestrainedly: "A few general rules extracted out of the French authors, with a certain cant of words, has sometimes set up an illiterate heavy writer for a most judicious and formidable critic." [2] As late as 1754, Arthur Murphy is respectful. "Criticism", he writes in *Gray's-Inn Journal*, "has been always said to have flourished more in France than any other country among the moderns. The French, it must be admitted, have had several eminent writers in this branch of literature." [3] He adduces Dacier, Bossu and Brumoy [4] as examples, then proceeds to denounce Voltaire as the corrupter of French criticism. [5] In describing an "election in Parnassus", Murphy says of "the poll for criticism": "there was a great number of boroughs in this country, most of which were represented by Frenchmen." [6] Here as elsewhere we have to wait for Warton's *Essay on the Genius of Pope* to see the tide clearly turn. Its iconoclasm extends from Boileau to French criticism in general. "Correctness is a vague term, frequently used without meaning and precision," we read in Section III on the *Essay on Criticism*. "It is perpetually the nauseous cant of the French critics and of their advocates and pupils, that the English writers are generally incorrect." [7] A little later, he explains his position more clearly: "That the French may boast some excellent critics, particularly Bossu, Boileau, Fénelon and Brumoy, cannot be denied; but that these are sufficient

1. *Complete Art of Poetry*. Dialogue II.
2. *The Spectator*, No. 291, Feb. 2, 1712.
3. *Op. cit.*, No. LXXIII. Saturday, March 9, 1754. Murphy's *Works*, v. VI, p. 189 ff.
4. See below, p. 297.
5. See below, p. 301.
6. *Op. cit.*, No. LXXXIII, Saturday, May 18, 1754. Murphy's *Works*, v. VI, p. 290.
7. *Essay on Pope*, v. I, p. 196.

to form a taste upon, without having recourse to the genuine fountains of all polite literature, I mean the Grecian writers, no one but a superficial reader can allow." In other words, Warton is objecting to the French critics being regarded as all-sufficient guides; and his words are interesting testimony to the fact that many did so regard them.

The attitude of Owen Ruffhead is more uncompromisingly hostile. He attributes "the character of an acute critic" (which he admits John Dennis bore in the earlier part of the century) to the fact that he was "indebted for this character to those (and they are the gross body of readers) who could not distinguish between the *mechanical* part of criticism which was learnt by the study of the French critics, and that more liberal part which can only be acquired by the *mens divinior*." [1] Colman's allegorical essay, *Literary Offerings in the Temple of Fame*, contains, however, the worst snub for the French critics. The high priests of the temple, Aristotle and Longinus, refuse the aid of these critics as assistants. "The offers were rejected by both priests with the utmost indignation, and their whole works were thrown on the altar and reduced to ashes in an instant." [2]

Yet even such apparent enemies of the French as these are by no means wholly consistent in their attitude; they weaken sometimes under the weight of a century-old tradition which they know is against them; as has been already seen, Warton has on occasion a good deal of praise for Boileau if not for his critical brethren. Beattie in one place belittles the French critics, but he is careful to add in a note: "I should have said, the French critics of the present age. Few nations have produced more learned men than France. I speak here, not of the Stevens, the Daciers, the Rollins, the Fénelons; but of those writers who have learned from Voltaire to censure because they envy, and to criticize what they do not understand." [3] The learned Twining, in his edition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, quotes abundantly and often with high respect, from nearly all the French critics. [4]

Towards the close of the century, however, their reputation rapidly declined. Pinkerton, in his *Letters of Literature* (1785), writes: "I entirely agree with you that Bossu and the other

1. *Life of Alexander Pope* (1769), p. 99.
2. *The Adventurer*, No. 90.
3. *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, v. I, p. 267 (Philadelphia, 1809).
4. See Index for references.

French critics, whom Addison followed with blind adoration, cannot be held in too sovereign contempt. "[1] It is true that Coleridge, in a curious passage, has an apparently kindly reference to them. He is discussing the question of judging of things by our own local customs, and says : "In this narrow circle, individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, as the French critics have done in their own literature."[2] Yet, from what testimony we have gathered regarding Coleridge's competence as a student of French literature, it is doubtful whether great importance should be attached to this *obiter dictum*. The opinion of Sir Walter Scott in his review of Southey's *Curse of Kehama* is probably more representative of contemporary opinion. After belittling the classical epic laws of Bossu, he continues : "There are, however,..... laws by which mutability is regulated in her various and capricious movements, and which therefore may supply the critic with a code independent of her influence. Such laws, indeed, are to be drawn, not from the mechanical jargon of French criticism, but from an accurate consideration of the springs and movements of the human heart."[3] De Quincey's anathema is what we would expect. In a passage outlining the scheme of an ideal work on rhetoric : "Were this done we should no longer see those incoherent sketches which are now circulating in the world upon questions of taste, of science, of practical address, as applied to the management of style and rhetoric; the public ear would no longer be occupied by feeble Frenchmen — Rollin, Rapin, Batteux, Bouhours, Du Bos, and *id genus omne*, nor by the elegant but desultory Blair..."[4] But it is Christopher North who, in his airy way, wafts the French critics into the limbo of forgotten authors. "Of the French school of philosophical criticism," he says, "I need say nothing. La Harpe is clear and sparkling enough, but very commonplace and very shallow. The names of twenty others prior to him I might recollect if I chose — but I choose at present to forget them — as the rest of the world has done."[5] And the world has seldom recollected them since.

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 19. Letter III.
2. J. W. Mackail, *Coleridge's Literary Criticism*, p. 183.
3. *The Quarterly Review*, Feb. 1811, v. V, p. 43. Also, Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose*, v. 17.
4. De Quincey's *Works*. Masson ed. v. X, p. 192.
5. *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, April, 1829.

CHAPTER III

D'AUBIGNAC AND CORNEILLE

The Restoration practitioners of the drama, like Dryden, who in the year 1660 were looking for guidance in rule and method, would have at their disposal two formal treatises in French setting forth the strictest principles of the neo-classic dramatic theory, the *Poétique* of La Mesnardière (1640), and the *Pratique du Théâtre* of the Abbé d'Aubignac (known also as Hédelin) (1657). They would also have something considerably more congenial, a discussion of these theoretic principles by a great practitioner of somewhat anti-classical leanings, the three *Discours* of Corneille (1660).

Of La Mesnardière I have been able to find practically no mention at all. His name occurs in a marginal note in Rymer's Preface to his translation of Rapin's *Réflexions*; and Professor W. P. Ker says that Martin Clifford accused Dryden of pilfering from " Monsieur Hédelin, Mesnardière and Corneille " in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.[1] That is all; possibly the reason is that La Mesnardière was regarded as being superseded by d'Aubignac. To a modern reader, indeed, La Mesnardière seems, if anything, a trifle more interesting than D'Aubignac; but probably the dogmatic practicalness of the latter appealed more to men looking for authoritative guidance.

Of d'Aubignac (who is usually known as Hédelin) himself there is singularly little mention. His book was translated into English in 1684, under the title of *The Whole Art of the Stage, now made English*. Blount, in his *De Re Poetica*, has two long quotations from this translation in his chapter " Concerning Comedy. "[2] They are taken from Book IV, ch. 2, and deal with the origin and history of comedy. The same author in his *Characters and Censures*, quotes " Hédelin " on Terence.[3] In the " Translator's

1. *Essays of Dryden*, v. I; p. xxxvi. Professor Ker does not give his reference.
2. *Op. cit.*, pp. 54–55.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 229.

Preface" to *Mixt Essays written originally in French by the Sieur de Saint Evremont* (1685) we read : " L'abbé Hédelin undertook the theatre, of which he published the most perfect treatise yet extant. " In Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (1691) occurs this sentence : " I have not that I know of anywhere accused the poets in general or Mr. Dryden in particular for borrowing their plots, knowing that it is allowed by Scaliger, M. Hédelin, and other writers. " In *The Athenian Mercury* for March 22, 1692 (Vol. 6, No. 17), Question I takes the following form : " If therefore instead of making the drama an image of life we called it an image of what is imitable in life represented as imitable ; and so on the contrary there could none sure be enemies to it who understood themselves. And such it would be, were the Abbot Hédelin's model only to be followed ; but, were it once brought into that form, we doubt the playhouse would soon be as much out of request as the churches, and the price of a play be lowered to sixpence as well as that of a sermon . "

One of Mr. P. M. Barnard's book-catalogues (No. 111) brings us the interesting information that David Garrick possessed a copy of D'Aubignac in the original French, the first volume containing the great actor's book-plate. He had evidently taken note of the fact that it was announced as a work that was necessary, not only " à ceux qui veulent s'appliquer à la Composition des Poëmes Dramatiques ", but also " à ceux qui les récitent en public. " That D'Aubignac's reputation had not died out late in the eighteenth century is evident from a quotation from him in Twining's edition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, accompanied by the following note : " This author, though neither a good writer nor a deep scholar, has collected in this book a good deal of curious *theatrical* erudition, and made some acute and judicious observations on the rules of dramatic writing....."

However, there is reason to suspect a much greater indebtedness to D'Aubignac among English critics than they have seen fit to acknowledge. He is the great Aristotelian formalist as far as the stage is concerned ; and his insistence on the three unities, on verisimilitude, on decorum, etc., is entirely unmitigated by any of that furtive suspicion that there are " graces beyond the reach of art " which frequently flits through the minds of men like Rapin. Therefore I should be very much inclined, notwithstanding that Rymer is the English sponsor of Rapin, to think that D'Aubignac is more responsible than Rapin for the unbending Aristotelianism of

The Tragedies of the Last Age and *The Short View of Tragedy*. Why such a conspiracy of silence should cover the name of "Monsieur Hédelin" in an age when men apparently took a delight in marshalling rather than in concealing their critical sources, and when his analogue in the epic, Le Bossu, is mentioned on every critical page for a hundred years, is certainly mysterious. Of course we should naturally expect a *somewhat* greater popularity for Le Bossu, as dissent from the ideals of the Aristotelian epic was almost non-existent everywhere in Europe, whereas neo-classical tragedy never took much of a hold in England. But that does not explain why men like Rymer should be ashamed to name the man who taught them to admire it.[1]

The *Discours* of Corneille would naturally, however, be much more attractive to the more independent-minded of English Restoration dramatists, and we are not surprised to find the greatest of these making very early use of them. Professor Ker says that "from Corneille's essays in the 1660 edition of his plays, Dryden seems to have got, if not the original impulse to write freely about his literary opinions, at any rate a quickening of interest in critical discussion which left its effects on all his later writings."[2] Not only is this general influence of Corneille upon Dryden obvious, but in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) there are detailed and acknowledged borrowings. It is unnecessary to rehearse mention of Corneille's plays in the *Essay*, but it is perhaps worth while to point out that when Neander wants to press home his final argument for preferring the "irregular English plays" to the "regular French ones", it is from the great French critic-dramatist that he quotes: "But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly tied up by those laws for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the three Unities: 'Il est facile aux speculatifs

1. Gray's friend, West, in a letter to Walpole (Oct. 31, 1736) mentions "Hédelin's" name in passing (See Paget Toynbee: *Correspondence of Gray, West & Ashton*, I, 110). The "Life of Edmund Smith" (in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, but not by Johnson) has the following passage: "There was not a tract of credit upon that subject (criticism) which he (Smith) had not diligently examined, from Aristotle down to Hédelin and Bossu; so that, having each rule constantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities."

2. Ker, v. I, p. xix.

d'estre severes, &c. 'Tis easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when by experience, they had known how much we are bound up and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it.'" [1] Though there is no explicit borrowing from Corneille in Dryden's other essays on dramatic subjects, [2] they are nearly all characterized by that judicial balancing between the rules and the artistic need of individual liberty which the author no doubt learned from Corneille's *Discours*. So Ker's statement above that all Dryden's critical writings on the drama take their origin in Corneille's influence is perfectly justified. [3]

The only other explicit references to Corneille as a critic which I find within our period are in the passage quoted from Collier on p. 234 and Butler's poem *Upon Critics who judge of Modern Plays precisely by the Rules of the Ancients* (1678), line 29 ff :

> As is apparent by Speronys case,
> Which Lope Vega first began to steale,
> And after him the French Filew Corneille,
> And since our English Plagiarys Nim
> And steal their forfet Criticisms from him, etc.

The literary history of this passage is of a very rudimentary order; evidently Corneille seemed to Butler the head and front of the Aristotelian offending.

After the close of the seventeenth century, and with the dying-out of an active interest in dramatic composition, Corneille as a critic is entirely forgotten, and I find no mention of his name as such in the eighteenth century.

1. *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Ker, v. I, pp. 75-76. The passage from Corneille is as follows: " Il est facile aux spéculatifs d'être sévères; mais s'ils voulaient donner dix ou douze poëmes de cette nature au public, ils élargiroient peut-être les règles encore plus que je ne fais, sitôt qu'ils auraient reconnu par l'expérience quelle contrainte apporte leur exactitude, et combien de belles choses elle bannit de notre théâtre. "

2. See, however, the allusion to Corneille's views on the time allotted by the " Ancients " to a tragedy in the *Dedication of the Aeneis* (Ker. ed., v. II, pp. 157-158).

3. The following lines occur in *The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd* :

> So does he [i. e. Dryden] shine, reflecting from afar
> The rays he borrowed from a better star;
> — For rules which from Corneille and Rapin flow,
> Admired by all the scribbling herd below.

CHAPTER IV

LE BOSSU

To the modern student one of the strangest phenomena in the strange annals of neo-classicism is the history of Le Bossu's reputation; for this man, who represents that literary *régime* at its woodenest, is the most quoted in England of all the French critics (not excepting, I believe, Boileau himself). Le Bossu's *Traité du Poème épique*, published in Paris in 1675, at once superseded all other handbooks dealing with the heroic poem in France and England at least, if not in all countries under the neo-classic sway. [1] It was translated into English by a certain "W. J." in 1695 (but was influential in England long before that in its French form), and a second edition of the translation, printed together with translations of Dacier's *Essay on Satire* and Fontenelle's *Treatise on the Pastoral*, appeared in 1719. Dr. Hamelius is authority for the statement that this translation was reprinted in abbreviated form no less than thirteen times after 1725 with translations of Homer. [2]

The central doctrine of Le Bossu's book is summed up in the following definition of the epic which he gives: "L'Épopée est un discours inventé avec art, pour former les mœurs par des instructions déguisées sous les allégories d'une action importante, qui est racontée en vers d'une manière vraisemblable, divertissante et merveilleuse." Le Bossu's belief, in other words, is that the epic poet first discovers the moral he wishes to teach, proceeding afterwards

1. The earlier French authority on the epic, Mambrun, with his Latin treatise *De Poemate Epico* (1652), seems to have been almost unknown in England. The only reference to him I have found is in that man of wide and curious reading, William Hayley, who quotes from him and who had apparently read him carefully. He seems to ascribe to his influence the outburst of 17th-century epic poetry in France. See *Works of William Hayley*, v. IV, p. 191.

2. *Die Kritik in der englischen Literatur des 17ten und 18ten Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1897, p. 84.

to clothe it in an epic allegory. The table of contents of Le Bossu's book will give a further idea of the skeleton of Le Bossu's discussion: "Book I, De la Nature du poème épique, et de la fable; Bk. II, De la Matière du poème épique, ou de l'action; Bk. III, De la forme du poème épique, ou de la narration; Bk. IV, Des Mœurs; Bk. V, Des Machines; Bk. VI, Des Sentiments et de l'Expression."

Now this definition and this skeleton were used as critical schedules for almost all concrete examinations of narrative poems during the next hundred years, and whenever we come upon critical reviews of epic poetry, they are pretty sure to be based upon Le Bossu's scheme. It will be convenient, before outlining the general history of Le Bossu's reputation, to notice the cases where this scheme was applied in concrete criticism.

The earliest instance, I think, of this practical application of Le Bossu is to be found in Blackmore's Preface to his epic poem, *Prince Arthur* (1695), where the outline he gives of the ideal epic is a tame recapitulation of the French theorist's book. Especially the definition of the epic: "An epic poem is a feigned or devised story of an illustrious action, related in verse, in an allegorical, probable, delightful and admirable manner to cultivate the mind with instructions of virtue," is practically a translation of the definition given above. The English translation of Le Bossu, which appeared in the same year just a short time after *Prince Arthur*, is dedicated to Blackmore, because, says the translator, "the author is well-known by all to be one you are intimately acquainted with: witness your excellent *Prince Arthur*, wherein you have in a great measure confined yourself to the rules and precepts which Aristotle and Horace, and even our Bossu have prescribed to the Ethic (*sic*) Poem." The translation was prompted, he goes on to tell us, by the imminence of a translation of Virgil, "by an eminent hand" (unquestionably Dryden's, which appeared in 1697), as it occurred to him that it would be "proper and useful to usher it in by the *Reflections* of so able a critic." "Besides, it has the fortune to come out just after Dr. Blackmore's poem and may be of great use to those who have an inclination to poetry, for by it they will be able to judge of this English poet."[1]

Did John Dennis ponder this last sentence? At all events, he

1. Monsieur Bossu's Treatise of the Epick Poem: Preface. 2nd ed. in 2 vols. 1719.

immediately set himself to write his *Remarks on Prince Arthur* (published in 1696), which Professor Saintsbury calls the first real literary review in English, and which is wholly based on Le Bossu's criteria. It is rather piquant to find that the stern Dennis finds fault with Blackmore's epic, which was heralded by such a blowing of the Bossu-trumpet, precisely on the ground that it does not meet the Bossu-requirements. Dennis begins by enunciating Le Bossu's definition of an epic poem; and, on p. 18, in discussing the need of having the episodes in an epic connect themselves with the main action, he quotes Le Bossu: "Il y a bien de la différence entre lier le récit de l'action à quelque chose et y lier l'action même." On pp. 36 and 37, he appeals to Le Bossu; and, in pointing out that Blackmore's fable is not a universal truth, he says: "For, says Bossu, the most essential part of a fable and that which indispensably ought to be the foundation of it is the truth that is signified by it. Le Bossu requires that an epic shall be an allegory concealing a moral truth; but the subject of Mr. Blackmore's poem, as we have proved, is not a universal and allegorical action, but the particular adventures of Arthur; which adventures, to make use of the words of Bossu, if they are feigned, make the poem an empty fiction and a mere amusement." On page 44 he says: "In speaking of 'the things which make a narrative delightful' I shall be the more succinct, because Bossu has so fully and so admirably treated of them, that scarce anything can be added to what he has said, and the reader may very well be referred to him." On page 52 we read: "Thus we have laid down the doctrines of the two great critics, Aristotle and Horace, in relation to the manners. Let us now take notice of two or three very important precepts which Bossu has grounded upon that doctrine and which he has drawn from his piercing observations of the conduct of Homer and Virgil." Dennis goes on to specify the "two or three precepts," namely, that the epic hero is to be individualized and have always the same leading quality as the foundation of his character.

Thus did Dennis, before the close of the seventeenth century, set the example to all eighteenth-century reviewers of taking Le Bossu's scheme as the basis of epic criticism. He was one of the first to follow his own example. For it must be clear, even from the few extracts quoted from his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*, in Bk. II, that there too Le Bossu's schedule is followed in the examination of the *Lutrin* and the *Rape*. The insistence on the moral

and the censure of the *Rape* for its lack of one [1], and the fourfold division of the critical examination — fable, characters, sentiments, diction — are adequate proof of this.

Two signal examples of the application of Le Bossu's scheme are to be found in Addison. In introducing his discussion of *Chevy Chase*, he says that " the greatest modern critics have laid down as a rule, that an heroic poem should be founded on some important precept of morality, adapted to the constitution of the country in which the poet writes. "[2] This is simply a combination of two passages from Le Bossu : " La première chose est de choisir l'instruction et le point de morale " and " il (le poète) emploie moins la force du raisonnement que l'insinuation et le plaisir, s'accommodant aux coutumes et aux inclinations particulières de ses auditeurs. " The idea that Homer wrote the *Iliad* to show the Greeks the peril of political disunion is also taken from Le Bossu. So, says Addison, the author of *Chevy Chase* wrote that poem in order " to deter men from such unnatural contention. " And the plan of the discussion — first the moral, then the incidents, then the sentiments and expressions — follows Le Bossu's scheme exactly.

Addison's papers on *Paradise Lost* exemplify the influence of the French critic on a still larger scale. The author announces that he is going to examine Milton's poem " by the rules of epic poetry, "[3] which, in the eighteenth century, is an equivalent phrase for the rules of Le Bossu. But we have more certain evidence of Addison's sources than this. The scheme, as in *Chevy Chase*, is Le Bossu's ; first the fable, then the characters, then the sentiments and expressions. Besides, when Addison says that " the action should have three qualifications in it : First, it should be but one action ; Secondly, it should be an entire action ; and Thirdly, it should be a great action, "[4] he is paraphrasing Le Bossu's " l'action épique a quatre conditions. La première est son unité ; la seconde, son intégrité ; la troisième, son importance ; et la quatrième, sa durée. "[5] Though Le Bossu's last division " la durée "

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 8. " As the *Rape* is an empty trifle, it can have no fable nor any moral; whereas *Le Lutrin* has both fable and moral. " On p. 20, Le Bossu on " Machines " is quoted.
2. *The Spectator*, No. 70.
3. *The Spectator*, No. 267.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Traité du Poème épique.*

is not mentioned here by Addison, it is discussed at the end of the paper : " But Aristotle, by the greatness of the action, does not only mean that it should be great in its nature, but also in its duration, or, in other words, that it should have a due length in it, as well as what we properly call greatness. " The remarks in the same paper that " Aristotle himself allows that Homer has nothing to boast of as to the unity of his fable, though at the same time this great critic and philosopher endeavours to palliate this imperfection in the Greek poet by imputing it in some measure to the very nature of an epic poem " and that " modern critics have collected from several hints in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* the space of time which is taken up by the action of each of these poems " are probably also indebted to Le Bossu. [1] Many other instances of borrowing from the same source could be adduced if the space could be afforded for a thorough examination of all the *Paradise Lost* papers from this point of view.

Pope's dual attitude — one might almost call it a " Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde " attitude — towards Le Bossu is very curious. As translator of Homer, he is full of respect for him. His Preface to his translation of the *Iliad* follows Le Bossu's critical scheme and the following allegorical interpretation of Homer's poem : " To proceed to the allegorical fable : if we reflect upon those innumerable knowledges, those secrets of nature and physical philosophy, which Homer is generally supposed to have wrapped up in his allegories, what a new and ample scene of wonder may this consideration afford us ! " comes clearly from the same source. In the case of his translation of the *Odyssey*, his avowal is complete, for he prefaces it with " A General View of the Epic Poem, and of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, extracted from Bossu. "

On the other hand, in his capacity as satirist and mock-heroic poet, Pope is the first English writer to ridicule Le Bossu by burlesque applications of his critical scheme. The Preface to *The Dunciad* by " Martin Scriblerus " contains a dryly humorous analysis of the poem *à la Bossu* (Pope's own notes refer specifically to Le Bossu). The sentence : " Now, our author, living in those times, did consider it an endeavour well worthy an honest satirist, to dissuade the dull, and punish the wicked, the only way that was left, " [2] states the moral of the poem according to Le

1. See ch. 6, and ch. 18 of Bk. II, respectively of Le Bossu's treatise.
2. Vide Bossu, *Du Poème Épique*, ch. VIII (Pope's note).

Bossu. Then " this truth he wrappeth in an allegory [1] (as the construction of Epic poesy requireth). " Further on : " The great power of these Goddesses acting in alliance..... was to be exemplified in some *one great* and *remarkable* action. "[2] " A Person must next be fixed upon to support this Action. This *Phantom* in the poet's mind must have a name :[3] He finds it to be... , and he becomes of course the hero of the Poem. " So far the borrowings are acknowledged by Pope in foot-notes. But the rest of the Preface is no less based on Le Bossu. The division of the discussion into the Fable, the Machinery, the Episodes, the Characters, the Description, the Comparisons, the Narration and the Diction, is hopelessly tell-tale. The " disembodied " epic of Le Bossu, that epic of which Professor Saintsbury says that it makes one feel " that, to hanker after an actual poem, be it *Iliad* or *Orlando*, has something sinful — something of the lust of the flesh , "[4] has never been better " taken off " than in this passage. Yet Pope returns to the charge in another place. The fifteenth chapter of Martin Scriblerus' *Of the Art of Sinking in Poetry. A Receipt to make an Epic Poem*, is, of course, an elaborate skit on the formal epic *à la Bossu*.

Yet skits and satires did not prevent Le Bossu's schedule for the critical examination of narrative poems from being applied down to the very end of the eighteenth century. Chalmers noted in his Life of Glover that Lyttelton's remarks on the former's *Leonidas* were " perhaps too much like the criticism of Bossu on the *Iliad*. "[5] Mickle's Advertisement to his *Syr Martyn* (1767) is indebted to the French critic. " It is an established maxim in criticism, " he says, " that an interesting moral is essential to a good poem..... It is also an established maxim in criticism that the subject of a poem should be one; that every part should contribute to the completion of one design, which, properly pursued, will naturally diffuse itself into a regular beginning, middle and end. Yet, in attaining this unity of the whole, the necessary regularity must still be poetical, for the spirit of poetry cannot exist under the shackles of logical or mathematical arrangement. Or, to use the words of a very eminent critic,

1. Bossu, ch. VII (Pope's note).
2. Bossu, chs. VII, VIII (Pope's note).
3. Bossu, ch. VIII (Pope's note).
4. Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*, v. II, p. 313.
5. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XVII, p. 4.

' As there must needs be a connection, so that connection will best answer its end, and the purpose of the writer, which, whilst it leads by a sure train of thinking to the conclusion in view, conceals itself all the while, and leaves to the reader the satisfaction of supplying the immediate links and joining together, in his own mind, what is left in a seeming posture of neglect and inconnection. ' " [1] Perhaps the very last notable application of Le Bossu's criteria is the most piquant of all. I refer to the once celebrated *Dissertation on Ossian* (1763) by Hugh Blair, in which the poem which carried the banner of Romance all over Europe is analysed according to the strict schedule of moral, fable, manners, etc., and is justified because of the adherence to these rules which Blair thinks he discovers in it. It is possible that, if it had not seemed to conform fundamentally to these requirements, it would not have been taken up so enthusiastically by an age which was only in the tadpole stage between neo-classicism and romanticism and still easily frightened by out-and-out heresies. Perhaps Le Bossu was, all unconsciously, one of the midwives of romanticism.

From our modern point of view, perhaps the best we can say for Le Bossu is that, grotesque as his criteria seem to us in detail, yet these criteria served as useful pigeon-holes into which critics were compelled to put precise references to concrete points of style and construction in the literary works they were criticizing, and thus contributed to bring literary criticism down out of the " vast inane " of general aesthetic theorizing into fruitful contact with actual works of creative literature. Without him, perhaps, the " book-review " would not have got under way so soon. The neo-classic age formed no such modest estimate, however, of Le Bossu's services, as we shall see by following the interesting curve of his reputation.

Even the strongest efforts of the historical imagination hardly avail to put us in touch with the state of mind of men in Restoration England who could see in Le Bossu a great critical light. Professor Saintsbury even goes so far as to suggest that Dryden had his tongue in his cheek when he sang the good father's praises. [2] It is unnecessary to accuse a whole generation of aesthetic insincerity. The words in which the translator of the *Traité du*

1. Chalmers' *English Poets*, v. XVII, p. 541.
2. *History of Criticism*, v. II, p. 314.

Poème épique commends his author, may, if carefully weighed, give us, I think, a clue to the causes of his popularity. "What he (i. e. Le Bossu) takes from Aristotle and Horace he explains, improves and refines: What is his own, though never so judicious and rational, he lays down not in a dogmatical, magisterial way, but by way of problem; and what he asserts with an air of confidence, though not his master's thoughts, yet seem to be natural deductions from what they have wrote about it. 'Tis not to be questioned but in many things he dissents from most men's opinions; but 'tis to be hoped no judicious person will condemn him till he has seriously weighed his reasons... In a word, he has throughout the whole acquitted himself like a true, judicious and impartial critic. He commends the excellencies of the good, and censures the failings of the worst poets with such a justness and moderation as deserves a particular esteem and admiration." It will be noticed that Le Bossu's sponsor does not deny that "in many things he dissents from most men's opinions;" what reconciled them to this was, probably, that he presented his theories "by way of problem." We too often forget how much the age which witnessed the founding of the Royal Society and the spread of the Cartesian philosophy was permeated by the mathematical and logical spirit. The construction or analysis of an epic according to Le Bossu's scheme became a fascinating minor adventure for an age which, in its graver moments, demonstrated the reality of God with Malebranche or mapped out the universe with Newton. That this ruling logical passion did not, in the case of the greater geniuses like Dryden, always pull very well with their instinctive feeling for poetic beauty, is certain; but there is no reason for regarding either of these contending enthusiasms as unreal or forced.

Le Bossu's formal introduction to the critical world of England, occurred, as far as I can discover, in Mulgrave's *Essay upon Poetry* (1682); and the note of unbounded enthusiasm, which surprises us so much, is heard at once. Mulgrave has been exalting the heroic poem as "the chief effort of human sense" and exhorting his audience to

> Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
> For all things else will seem so dull and poor,
> You'l wish't unread; but oft upon him look,
> And you will hardly need another book.

He then proceeds :

> Had Bossu never writ, the world had still
> Like Indians view'd this wondrous piece of skill ;
> As something of Divine the work admired,
> Hoped not to be instructed, but inspired;
> Till he, disclosing sacred mysteries,
> Has shewn where all the mighty magic lies,
> Described the seeds, and in what order sown,
> That have to such a vast proportion grown.
> Sure from some angel he the secret knew,
> Who through this labyrinth has given the clue![1]

These lines reveal to us very clearly the aspect under which Le Bossu appeared to literary people of those days ; he transformed the epics of Homer from inexplicable miracles into ingenious mechanisms and inspired the hope that modern poets, if endowed with sufficient intelligence, would not have to await any more mysterious gift in order to erect similar symmetrical engines themselves.

One thing is certain — Dryden was well-read in Le Bossu and has not a hard word to say of him. In the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* he appeals to the authority of Le Bossu, " the best of modern critics, " to show that modern writers should have respect for ancient rules ;[2] and in the same work he appeals again to Le Bossu on a technical dramatic point.[3] In the *Original and Progress of Satire*, he lays down that the writer of an heroic poem " must have exactly studied Homer and Virgil as his patterns, Aristotle and Horace as his guides [4] and Vida and Bossu as their commentators. "[5] In the *Parallel of Poetry and Painting*, he says : " For the moral (as Bossu observes) is the first business of the poet as being the groundwork of his instruction. This being formed, he contrives such a design or fable as may be suitable to the moral; after this he begins to think of the persons whom he is to employ in carrying on his design ; and gives them the manners which are most proper for their several characters. The thoughts and words are the last parts which give beauty and colouring to the piece; "[5] and a little farther on, " Whether Virgil's action was compre-

1. See J. E. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, v. II, p. 295.
2. W. P. Ker, *Essays of Dryden*, v. I, p. 211.
3. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 218.
4. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 43.
5. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 127.

hended in a year or somewhat more, is not determined by Bossu." [1] In the same *Essay*, Le Bossu and Dacier are praised. [2] The influence of Le Bossu is strong in that part of the *Dedication of the Aeneis* where the "morals" of Homer's and Virgil's epics are compared, [3] and later in the same essay comes the famous saying (which, I think, was the main cause of Professor Saintsbury's suspicion concerning Dryden's seriousness) that "Spenser wanted only to have read the rules of Bossu." [4]

Rymer does homage to Le Bossu in the Epistle Dedicatory to his *Short View of Tragedy* (1693): "The world owes much to Cardinal Richelieu for his encouragement to the Belles Lettres. From thence we may reckon that we begin to understand the Epic Poem by the means of Bossu; and tragedy by Monsieur Dacier. The world is not agreed which is the nobler poem. Plato and Bossu prefer the former, Aristotle and Dacier declare for tragedy." In Congreve's *Double Dealer* (1694), Brisk asks Lady Froth (Act. II, sc. 1), who is reported to have written an heroic poem: "I presume your Ladyship has read Bossu?" to which the lady replies, "O, yes, and Rapin, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace." *The Athenian Mercury* of Jan. 26, 1695 (Vol. XVI, No. 12), has a discussion of the epic poem *à la Bossu*, in Question 4. These last two instances may show that Le Bossu had penetrated beyond the professional poets and critics into "highbrow" society in general. In 1699, Jeremy Collier refers to Le Bossu in his *Defence of the Short View of the Immorality of the English Stage*. [5]

We have already seen how liberally Dennis drew upon Le Bossu in his *Remarks on Prince Arthur* and his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*. He has scattered references to him in his other critical works, particularly in the *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701), where, in the course of a comparison of Milton with Virgil, he says: "His (i. e. Milton's) inequality proceeded from his want of art to manage his subject and make it constantly great. For it would be an easy matter to prove that none of the moderns understood the art of heroic poetry, who writ before Bossu took pains to unravel the mystery." [6]

1. W. P. Ker, *Essays of Dryden*, v. II, p. 131.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 136.
3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 167. See also, II, 204.
4. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 220.
5. *Op. cit.*, p. 24.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

Addison, whom we have seen to be much indebted to Le Bossu for a schedule on which to build up his celebrated *examens* of *Chevy Chase* and *Paradise Lost*, does not explicitly mention Le Bossu very often. He seems to have in mind a passage from him (Bk. I, ch. XII) in *Spectator* No. 183, where he is speaking of the idea of " some of the ancient critics that the several names of gods and heroes " in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* " are nothing else but the affections of the mind in a visible shape and character. " In *Spectator* No. 327 he says : " I question but Bossu and the two Daciers, who are for vindicating everything that is censured in Homer by something parallel in holy writ, would have been very well pleased had they thought of confronting Vulcan's tripodes with Ezekiel's wheels. " And the extraordinarily high place given to Le Bossu at that time was never more clearly brought out than in the following sentence in *Spectator* No. 409, where the French Aristotelian is placed in what seems to us altogether too distinguished company : " I cannot think that Corneille, Racine, Boileau, La Fontaine, La Bruyère, Bossu or the Daciers, would have written so well as they have done, had they not been friends and contemporaries. " Perhaps Professor Saintsbury would say that Addison, too, had his tongue in his cheek here.

The vacillating nature of English classicism is well illustrated by two passages from Addison, in which he tries to hold off at arm's length this critic whom at other times he praises so highly and utilizes so liberally. The first occurs in *Spectator* No. 327, where he says : " Had I followed Monsieur Bossu's method, in my first paper on Milton, I should have dated the action of *Paradise Lost* from the beginning of Raphael's speech in this book, as he supposes the action of the *Aeneid* to begin in the second book of that poem. I could allege many reasons for my drawing the action of the *Aeneid* rather from its immediate beginning in the first book, than from its remote beginning in the second, and shew why I have considered the sacking of Troy as an episode according to the common acceptation of that word, etc. " The second passage, which is absolutely iconoclastic and strikes at the heart of Le Bossu's theory (thereby anticipating Blair by nearly a century), occurs in *Spectator* No. 369, the last of the Milton papers : " Those who have read Bossu, and many of the critics who have written since his time, will not pardon me if I do not find out the particular moral which is inculcated in *Paradise Lost*. Though I can by no means think with the last-mentioned French author, that an epic

writer first of all pitches upon a certain moral, as the groundwork and foundation of his poem, and afterwards finds out a story to it; I am, however, of opinion that no just heroic poem ever was or can be made from whence one great moral may not be deduced." From this last sentence it can be seen that Addison, after his vigorous protest, is about to capitulate as regards essentials; and in fact he goes on to show that *Paradise Lost* has a "great moral, which may be looked upon as the soul of the fable."

Shaftesbury, in his *Characteristics*, refers panegyrically to Le Bossu, "who in that admirable comment and explanation of Aristotle (his *Traité*) has perhaps not only shown himself the greatest of French critics, but presented the world with a view of ancient literature and just writing, beyond any other modern of whatever nation."[1] In his *Second Characters*, he mentions "Père Bossu" in a puzzling connection.[2]

There is not much need to dwell on Breval's *Epistle to Addison* (1717) wherein, praising the latter's *Cato*, he says: "Here Bossu's rules are mixt with Shakespeare's fire"; but it is interesting to have a near-contemporary's opinion as to Rymer's sources, like that of Theobald: "As for his (i. e. Rymer's) knowledge of the art of poetry, I can't perceive it was any deeper than his acquaintance with Bossu and Dacier, from whom he has transcribed many of his..... reflections."[3] Pope, in his *Preface to Homer's Iliad*, says: "Bossu's admirable Treatise of the Epic Poem" will give us "the justest notion of (Homer's) design and conduct."[4] The classical scholar, Thomas Blackwell, knew Le Bossu, for he quotes him in his *Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735). West (Gray's friend) wrote to Walpole (Oct. 31, 1736): "I return you ten thousand thanks for your late agreeable letter about Antony and Cleopatra, Cantaber and Cymodoce. I take your criticism on John Dryden..... to contain a great deal of learning and sagacity. Bossu himself nor Hédelin could not have made a juster remark than yours about the divorce of Scribonia from Tiberius."[5] Bossu

1. *Op. cit.*, v. I, p. 142, note.
2. *Op. cit.*, ed. Rand, p. 137.
3. *Essay on Shakespeare.*
4. Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* has a curious note on the reason why Pope calls his introduction to the *Iliad* "A view of the epic poem", using "poem" in the sense of poetry in general, and not a particular performance. He explains it as a Gallicism, suggested by Bossu's *Traité du poème épique.*
5. *Correspondence of Gray, West & Ashton*, ed. Paget Toynbee, v. I, p. 110.

is referred to by Cawthorne (see above p. 221) in his poem *The Birth and Education of Genius.*[1] Fielding has a few references to him in *The Covent Garden Journal* (No. 1, Sat., Jan. 4, 1752).[2] Arthur Murphy in *Gray's-Inn Journal* (No. 87, Sat., June 15, 1754), says : " Bossu and other critics have informed us that the epic fable must involve one entire action, that this action must have a beginning, a middle and an end. They have told us " [etc., etc., recapitulating all the rules of Bossu]..... " with many other particulars, which, though proper to be explained, do not in any way conduce to the refinements of taste, or the improvement of true genius. These rules, with many others of equal moment, are no more than observations upon the practice of great writers; and what great writers have done critics have been willing to convert into a law. Such laws may, in general, be convenient, but they are arbitrary at best. Those rules only which are founded upon the inward frame and constitution of man, can be regarded as permanent and unalterable. "[3]

Professor Spingarn's categorical statement that " in the dozen years between *Tom Jones*, XI, 1[4] and *Tristram Shandy*, III, 12, his (Le Bossu's) fame withered and died, "[5] is too strong. It is certain that Le Bossu suffered, like all the French critics, from the reaction against neo-classicism that set in about 1750. But the implication that his name was forgotten by 1760 has no basis in fact. Many fairly important people thought highly of him after that date. Mrs. Montague, in her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1767), says : " The object of the epic poem is..... to induce good habits. "[6] As late as 1781, " Hermes " Harris, while complaining of the paucity of critics of the philosophical sort in modern times, says : " However, of this rank among the French were *Rapin*, *Bouhours*, *Boileau*, together with Bossu, the most

1. Chalmers' *E. P*, v. XIV, p. 238.
2. *Op. cit.*, ed. by G. E. Jensen, pp. 138-9.
3. Murphy's *Works*, v. VI, p. 320.
4. The passage from *Tom Jones* is as follows : " I can never be understood ..... to endeavour to exclude from the commonwealth of literature any of those noble critics, to whose labours the learned world are so greatly indebted. Such were Aristotle, Horace and Longinus, among the ancients, Dacier and Bossu among the French, and some perhaps among us who have certainly been authorized to execute at least a judicial authority in *Foro Literario.* "
5. *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, v. II, p. 356.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 28. *Du poème épique*, par Bossu, l. 2, c. 17 (Mrs Montague's note).

methodic and accurate of them all. "[1] In a chapter of the same work where he is discussing "dramatic manners" in Aristotle, he has the following note: "Bossu, in his *Traité du poème épique*, has given a fine and copious commentary on this part of Aristotle's *Poetics*,"[2] and, a little farther on, he says: "See also the ingenious Bossu in his *Traité* which is as usual copious and clear."[3] Joseph Warton admired "the regularity of his (Le Bossu's) plan and the exactness of his method."[4] We have seen above[5] that Edmund Smith was acquainted with Le Bossu.

Strangely enough, the earliest work in English in which Le Bossu is formally ridiculed (in contradistinction to the "informal" skits of Pope) is the *Essay on Epic Poetry*, written by Voltaire in English and first published in 1727. This work was very popular, for several editions of it appeared between 1727 and 1761. Voltaire's attack goes straight to the heart of Le Bossu's theory: "for", he says, "to believe Homer and Virgil submitted beforehand to the rules laid down by Le Bossu, who bids an epic poet invent and dispose the constitution of his fable, before he thinks of the name of his heroes, is not indeed natural. In all likelihood they did not cut the coat without knowing whose shape it could fit."[6] It will be noticed that all the later attacks on Le Bossu in England follow the same line of approach; it is true that Addison had adumbrated it (see above pp. 253-54), but his remarks express little more than a polite and passing doubt. It seems likely that Voltaire, here if not elsewhere, began the undermining of a compatriot's reputation.[7]

Johnson seldom allows himself to be deliberately disrespectful towards a neo-classic critic, but it is not difficult to detect a certain coolness in the following in the "Life of Milton": "Bossu is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a moral, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton." But just as in the case of Boileau, so in that of Le Bossu, it is with the well-equipped and really critical Kames that the main attack on a long-established reputation begins;

1. *Philological Inquiries*, v. I, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 8.
3. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 9.
4. *The Adventurer*, No. 49.
5. See p. 241.
6. *Op. cit.*, ed. F. D. White, p. 93.
7. On Voltaire's influence on the reputation of the French critics in general, see pp. 300-301, and Index.

and as the provocation in Le Bossu was greater than in Boileau, so Kames' assaults on the former have a more ringing note, which makes them landmarks in the history of criticism. And the first passage-at-arms indicates the deadly nature of Kames' weapons. He has been speaking of how "in latter times, happily, reason hath obtained the ascendant", and goes on: "I am forced to exempt criticism, which, by what fatality I know not, continues to be no less slavish in its principles, nor less submissive to authority, than it was originally. Bossu, a celebrated French critic, gives many rules, but can discover no better foundation for any of them than the practice merely of Homer and Virgil, supported by the authority of Aristotle: strange! that in so long a work, he should never once have stumbled upon the question, whether and how far do these rules agree with human nature. It could not surely be his opinion, that these poets, however eminent for genius, were entitled to give law to mankind; and that nothing now remains but blind obedience to their arbitrary will; if in writing they followed no rule, why should they be imitated? If they studied nature and were obsequious to rational principles, why should these be concealed from us?"[1] The following passage — occurring in a note in the chapter on "Epic and Dramatic Composition" — is so epoch-making in its scorn of that cardinal law of the neo-classic canon, the division into kinds, that, though only one sentence directly concerns our critic, I make no apology for quoting it *in extenso*: "Much useless labour has been bestowed, to distinguish an epic poem by some peculiar mark. Bossu defines it to be, 'A composition in verse, intended to form the manners by instruction disguised under the allegories of an important action'; which excludes every poem founded upon real facts, and perhaps includes several of Aesop's Fables. Voltaire reckons verse so essential, as for that single reason to exclude the adventures of Telemachus. See his *Essay on Epic Poetry*. Others affected with substance more than with form, hesitate not to pronounce that poem to be epic. It is not a little diverting to see so many profound critics hunting for what is not; they take for granted without the least foundation, that there must be some precise criterion to distinguish epic poetry from every other species of writing. Literary compositions run into each other precisely like colours: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but they are susceptible of so much variety,

1. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Introd., p. xiv.

and of so many different forms, that we never can see where one species ends and another begins. As to the general taste, there is little reason to doubt, that a work where heroic actions are related in an elevated style, will, without further requisite, be deemed an epic poem. "[1] Lastly, in a note to the chapter on "The Three Unities", Kames descends to the lighter vein in continuing his attack on Le Bossu: "Bossu, after observing, with wondrous critical sagacity, that winter is an improper season for an epic poem, and night no less improper for tragedy, admits, however, that an epic poem may be spread through the whole summer months, and a tragedy through the whole sunshine hours of the longest summer day. *Du Poème épique*, l. III, chap. XII. At that rate, an English tragedy may be longer than a French tragedy; and in Nova Zembla the time of a tragedy and of an epic poem may be the same."[2] This *reductio ad absurdum* of Bossu's tenets shows that the awful fatality of having got the laughers on your enemy's side has at last overtaken Le Bossu.

It seems to me that it was in the above passages from Kames that the fatal poison was poured about the roots of Le Bossu's system; but perhaps the passage referred to by Mr. Spingarn in *Tristram Shandy*, the twelfth chapter of the third book, has oftener had the credit of doing this work: "And for the epic poem your Lordship bid me look at — upon taking the length, breadth, height and depth of it, and trying them at home upon an exact scale of Bossu's — 'tis out, my Lord, in every one of its dimensions..... Admirable connoisseur!" Vicesimus Knox, in No. 84 of his *Essays*, that on "Philosophical Criticism and on the little assistance it gives to Genius", makes the ironical remark that "No Bossu had written when Virgil produced his magnificent work," (to be contrasted with Dryden's egregious observation on Spenser above, p. 252). Though Blair, as I have shown, utilizes Le Bossu's schedule in his *Dissertation on Ossian*, he has, in that same work, a veritable trouncing of Le Bossu's conception of the work as an allegory, ending with these words: "Never did a more frigid pedantic notion enter into the mind of a critic." But it is in Blair's lecture on "Epic Poetry" in his *Lectures on Rhetoric*, that Le Bossu receives his *coup dé grâce*. He starts off refreshingly thus: "There is no subject, it must be confessed, on which critics have

1. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ch. XXII.
2. Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ch. XXIII.

displayed more pedantry than on this (i. e. the epic poem). By tedious disquisitions founded on a servile submission to authority, they have given such an air of mystery to a plain subject, as to render it difficult for an ordinary reader to conceive what an Epic Poem is. " He then proceeds to give what is perhaps the neatest abstract in English of Le Bossu's theory of the genesis of the epic—all in one page; and then comments thus : " This is one of the most frigid and absurd ideas, that ever entered into the mind of a critic. ' He goes on, however, to give Le Bossu's application of his theory to explain the genesis of the *Iliad*. And then come the damning sentences : " He that can believe Homer to have proceeded in this manner may believe anything. One may pronounce, with great certainty, that an author who should compose according to such a plan, who should arrange all the subject in his own mind with a view to the moral, before he had ever thought of the personages who were to be the actors, might write, perhaps, useful Fables for children ; but as to an Epic Poem, if he ventured to think of one, it would be such as would find few readers. "

After this terrible punishment, Le Bossu never raised his head again as a serious influence in England. But he continued for some time to expiate his long triumph by serving as an object of derision. Walpole gives expression to the new critical theories when he says : " In short, a man who declares he writes without rules may say what he pleases. If he invents happily, he succeeds, is indulged, and his piece lasts in spite of Aristotle and Bossu. "[1] William Hayley ridicules Le Bossu in verse and prose. In his *Essay on Epic Poetry* occur the following lines :

> Yet sober critics of no vulgar note,
> But such as Learning's sons are proud to quote,
> The progress of Homeric verse explain,
> As if their souls had lodged in Homer's brain.
> Laughs not the spirit of poetic frame,
> However slightly warmed by Fancy's flame,
> When grave Bossu, by system's studied laws
> The Grecian bard's ideal picture draws,
> And wisely tells us that his Song arose
> As the good Parson's quiet sermon grows ;
> Who, while his easy thoughts no pressure find
> From hosts of images that crowd the mind,

1. *Works of Walpole*, 5 vols., 1798, v. II, p. 321.

First calmly settles on some moral text,
Then creeps — from one division — to the next?[1]

In connection with this passage, Hayley has a long note extending over ten pages, in which he quotes from Le Bossu and ridicules his theory of the origin of the epic.[2] "Though Bossu," he says, "is called 'the best explainer of Aristotle, and one of the most learned and judicious of modern critics' by a writer for whose opinions I have much esteem, I cannot help thinking that his celebrated *Essay on Epic Poetry* is very ill-calculated either to guide or to inspirit a young poet. The absurdity of his advice concerning the mode of forming the fable, by choosing a moral, inventing the incidents and then searching history for names to suit them, has been sufficiently exposed; and as to his leading idea concerning the design of Homer in the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, I apprehend most poetical readers must feel that he is probably mistaken; for it is a conjectural point and placed beyond the possibility of decision. Perhaps few individuals differ more from each other in their modes of thinking, by the force of education and of national manners, than a modern French critic and an early poet of Greece; yet the former will often pretend, with the most decisive air, to lay open the sensorium of an ancient bard, and to count every link in the chain of his ideas."

In the notes to Twining's translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1789), Le Bossu is submitted again and again to the gruelling test of a scholarship a century more advanced than his own. Twining begins by convicting him of altering Aristotle's text in a marginal quotation;[3] he goes on to differ with his interpretation of the term ἐπεισόδιον as applied by Aristotle to tragedy[4] and of several other words and sections of the *Poetics*. "Mr. Harris, in his *Philological Inquiries*, p. 145, etc., seems to have deserted Aristotle for Le Bossu, who, with little reason, in my opinion, passed with him, as well as with Lord Shaftesbury for 'Aristotle's best interpreter'."[5] Later, he warms up to his subject: "Dacier admires and follows the nonsense of Le Bossu, who makes χρηστὰ ἤθη

1. *Op. cit.*, Epistle I, l. 225 ff.
2. *Works of Hayley*, v. III, p. 142.
3. Twining's translation of the *Poetics*, v. I, p. 35, note.
4. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 315 ff.
5. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 75. [Twining's note. See Treatise on Music, Painting etc. p. 83, note].

mean *poetically good*..... How could Mr. Harris..... recommend all this as a ' fine and copious commentary on this part of Aristotle's *Poetics*' ? "[1] He quotes the passage in which Le Bossu defends Homer's use of " low " words, because it is " a morsel of such rare and exquisite absurdity that I cannot withhold it from the reader. "[2] In discussing the purpose of Homer in writing the *Iliad*, he says : " But that the *chief end* and *purpose* of poetry is to *instruct* — that Homer wrote his *Iliad* on purpose to teach mankind the mischiefs of discord among chiefs and his *Odyssey* to prove to them the advantages of staying at home and taking care of their families — this is so manifestly absurd, that one is really astonished to see so many writers, one after the other, discoursing gravely in defence of it. "[3] Elsewhere he speaks of the " disgusting nonsense of Le Bossu. "[4]

Nineteenth-century references to Le Bossu have the character of epitaphs. Sir Walter Scott speaks of the critics " who would tie an author down to the rules of Scaliger and Bossu. "[5] Apropos of the dreary epic-mongers of the preceding centuries, he says : " They load our shelves indeed and are recorded in our catalogues ; but who can say that the learned labours of Bossu, so admirably ridiculed by Pope, have added one readable poem to the literature of France ? "[6] A reviewer of Lord Byron's dramas, disapproving of Byron's preference for the French classical type of play, says : " But any canons of poetry laid down by such a poet are entitled at least to a respectful examination. In the mutability, too, of fashion, it is by no means impossible that opinions which have the sanction of Lord Byron's name should attract a numerous herd of disciples. And, as the time has been when the solemn quackery of Bossu was received by many, even in England, as profound and solid criticism, we are anxious to prevent the risk of such cumbrous absurdity returning into power, by exposing the frothy foundation on which it stands and the needless hindrances which it opposes to dramatic excellence. "[7]

1. Twining's translation of the *Poetics*, v. II, p. 131.
2. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 302, note.
3. *Ibid.*, v, II, pp. 448-449.
4. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 448, note d.
5. Review of Southey's *Curse of Kehama*. *Quarterly Review*, Feb. 1811, Misc. Prose, v. 17.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Quarterly Review*, v. XXVII, p. 479, July 1822.

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